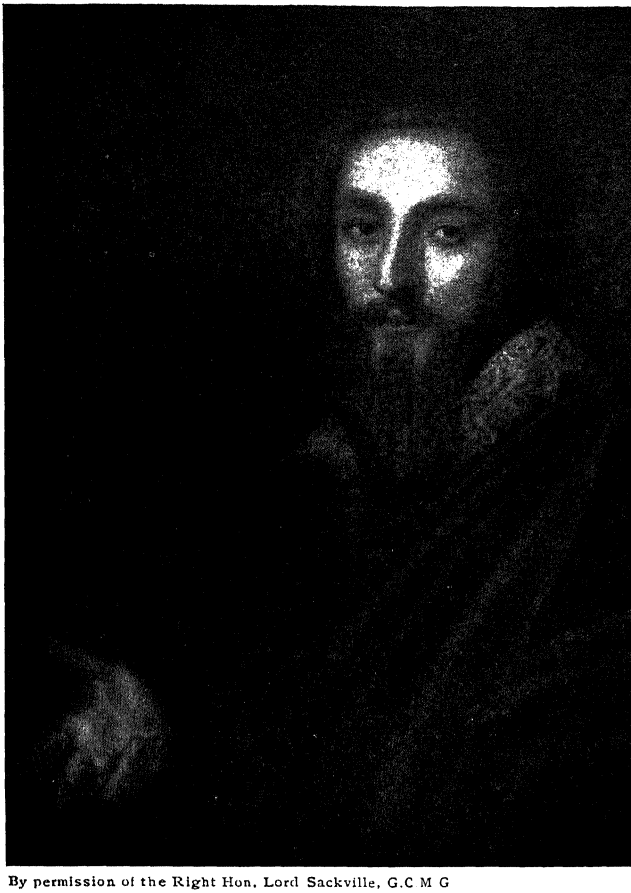


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PORTRAIT OF FRANCIS BEAUMONT
From the original painting at Knole Park

Francis Beaumont: Dramati

A Portrait

WITH SOME ACCOUNT
OF HIS CIRCLE, ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEA
AND OF HIS ASSOCIATION WITH
JOHN FLETCHER

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TO MY WIFE

PREFACE

IN this period of resurgent dramatic creativity when once more the literature of the stage enthralls the public and commands the publisher, it is but natural that playwright, play-lover, and scholar alike should turn with renewed and enlightened interest to the models afforded by our Elizabethan masters of the age of gold, to the circumstances of their production and the lives of their imperishable authors. Very close to Shakespeare stood Beaumont and Fletcher; but, though during the past three centuries books about Shakespeare have been as legion and studies of the "twin literary heroes" have run into the hundreds, to Fletcher as an individual but one book has been devoted, and to Beaumont but one.

A portrait of either Beaumont or Fletcher demands indeed as its counterpart, painted by the same brush and with alternating strokes, a portrait of his literary partner and friend. But in spirit and in favour the twain are distinct. In this book I have tried to present the poetic and compelling personality of Francis Beaumont not only as conjoined with, and distinguished from, the personality of Fletcher, but as seen against the background of historic antecedents and family connections and as tinged by the atmosphere

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BEAUMONT, THE DRAMATIST

PART ONE

BEAUMONT'S LIFE, HIS ACQUAINTANCES, AND HIS CAREER AS POET AND DRAMATIST.

BEAUMONT, THE DRAMATIST

CHAPTER I

THE CASTOR AND POLLUX OF ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

"AMONG those of our dramatists who either were contemporaries of Shakespeare or came after him, it would be impossible to name more than three to whom the predilection or the literary judgment of any period of our national life has attempted to assign an equal rank by his side. In the Argo of the Elizabethan drama — as it presents itself to the imagination of our own latter days — Shakespeare's is and must remain the commanding figure. Next to him sit the twin literary heroes, Beaumont and Fletcher, more or less vaguely supposed to be inseparable from one another in their works. The Herculean form of Jonson takes a somewhat disputed precedence among the other princes; the rest of these are, as a rule, but dimly distinguished." So, with just appreciation, our senior historian of the English drama, to-day, the scholarly Master of Peterhouse. Sir Adolphus Ward himself has, by availing of the inductive processes of the inventive and indefati-

gable Fleay and his successors in separative criticism, contributed not a little to a discrimination between the respective efforts of the "twin literary heroes" who sit next Jason; and who are "beyond dispute more attractive by the beauty of their creations than any and every one of Shakespeare's fellow-dramatists." But even he doubts whether "the most successful series of endeavours to distinguish Fletcher's hand from Beaumont's is likely to have the further result of enabling us to distinguish the mind of either from that of his friend." Just this endeavour to distinguish not only hand from hand, but mind from mind, is what I have had the temerity to attempt. And still not, by any means, a barefaced temerity, for my attempt at first was merely to fix anew the place of the joint-authors in the history of English comedy; and it has been but imperceptibly that the fascination of the younger of them, of Frank Beaumont, the personality of his mind as well as of his art, has so grown upon me as to compel me to set him before the world as he appears to me to be clearly visible.

In broad outline the figure of Beaumont has been, of course, manifest to the vision of poet-critics in the past. To none more palpably than to the latest of the melodious immortals of the Victorian strain. "If a distinction must be made," wrote Swinburne as early as 1875, "if a distinction must be made between the Dioscuri of English poetry, we must admit that Beaumont was the twin of heavenlier birth. Only as Pollux was on one side a demigod of diviner blood than Castor can it be said that on any side Beaumont was a poet of higher and purer genius than Fletcher; but

so much must be allowed by all who have eyes and ears to discern in the fabric of their common work a distinction without a difference. Few things are stranger than the avowal of so great and exquisite a critic as Coleridge, that he could trace no faintest line of demarcation between the plays which we owe mainly to Beaumont and the plays which we owe solely to Fletcher. To others this line has always appeared in almost every case unmistakable. Were it as hard and broad as the line which marks off, for example, Shakespeare's part from Fletcher's in *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* the harmony would of course be lost which now informs every work of their common genius. . . . In the plays which we know by evidence surer than the most trustworthy tradition to be the common work of Beaumont and Fletcher there is indeed no trace of such incongruous and incompatible admixture as leaves the greatest example of romantic tragedy . . . an unique instance of glorious imperfection, a hybrid of heavenly and other than heavenly breed, disproportioned and divine. But throughout these noblest of the works inscribed generally with the names of both dramatists we trace on every other page the touch of a surer hand, we hear at every turn the note of a deeper voice, than we can ever recognize in the work of Fletcher alone. Although the beloved friend of Jonson, and in the field of comedy his loving and studious disciple, yet in that tragic field where his freshest bays were gathered Beaumont was the worthiest and the closest follower of Shakespeare. . . . The general style of his tragic or romantic verse is as simple and severe in its purity of note and regularity

of outline as that of Fletcher's is by comparison lax, effusive, exuberant. . . . In every one of the plays common to both, the real difficulty for a critic is not to trace the hand of Beaumont, but to detect the touch of Fletcher. Throughout the better part of every such play, and above all of their two masterpieces, *Philaster* and *The Maid's Tragedy,* it should be clear to the most sluggish or cursory of readers that he has not to do with the author of *Valentinian* [Fletcher] and *The Double Marriage* [Fletcher and Massinger]. In those admirable tragedies the style is looser, more fluid, more feminine. . . . But in those tragic poems of which the dominant note is the note of Beaumont's genius a subtler chord of thought is sounded, a deeper key of emotion is touched, than ever was struck by Fletcher. The lighter genius is palpably subordinate to the stronger, and loyally submits itself to the impression of a loftier spirit. It is true that this distinction is never grave enough to produce a discord; it is also true that the plays in which the predominance of Beaumont's mind and style is generally perceptible make up altogether but a small section of the work that bears their names conjointly; but it is no less true that within this section the most precious part of that work is comprised."

The essay in which this noble estimate of Beaumont occurs remains indeed "the classical modern criticism of Beaumont and Fletcher," and although recent research has resulted in "variety of opinion concerning the precise authorship of some of the plays commonly attributed to those writers" its value is substantially unaffected. The figure as revealed in

glorious proportions to the penetrative imagination and the sympathy of poetic kinship, remains, but by the patient processes of scientific research the outlines have been more sharply defined and the very lineaments of Beaumont's countenance and of Fletcher's, too, brought, I think, distinctly before us. Though Swinburne attributes, almost aright, to Beaumont alone one play, *The Woman-Hater,* and ascribes to him the predominance in, and the better portions of *Philaster* and *The Maid's Tragedy,* and the high interest and graduated action of the serious part of *A King and No King,* and also justly associates him with Fletcher in the composition of *The Scornful Lady,* and gives him alone "the admirable study of the worthy citizen and his wife who introduced to the stage and escort with their applause *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,*" and implies his predominance in that play, he does not enumerate for us the acts and scenes and parts of scenes which are Beaumont's or Fletcher's, or Beaumont's revised by Fletcher, in any of these plays; and consequently he points us to no specific lines of poetic inspiration, no movements distinctively conceived by either dramatist and shaped by his dramatic pressure, no touchstone by which the average reader may verify for himself that "to Beaumont his stars had given as birthright the gifts of tragic pathos and passion, of tender power and broad strong humour," and that "to Fletcher had been allotted a more fiery and fruitful force of invention, a more aerial ease and swiftness of action, a more various readiness and fullness of bright exuberant speech." Though he is right in discerning in the homelier emotion and pathetic

interest of *The Coxcomb,* and of *Cupid's Revenge* the note of Beaumont's manner, he couples with the former *The Honest Man's Fortune* in which it is more than doubtful whether Beaumont had any share. To speak of Arbaces in *A King and No King* as Beaumont's, is mainly right, but not wholly, and to assign to him the keen prosaic humour of Bessus and his swordsmen, is to assign precisely the scenes that he did not compose. To speak of Beaumont's *Triumph of Love* is perhaps defensible; but, with grave reluctance, we now question the attribution. He is justified in withdrawing "the noble tragedy of *Thierry and Theodoret*" from the field of Beaumont's coöperation and ascribing it to Fletcher and Massinger; but he is undoubtedly wrong when he fails to couple the latter's name with that of Fletcher as author of *Valentinian.* Writing as Swinburne did after a study of Fleay's first investigations into the versification of Fletcher, Beaumont, and Massinger, the wonder is not that once or twice, as a critic, he makes an incorrect attribution, but that his poetic instinct so successfully defied the temptation to enumerate in detail the respective contributions of Beaumont and Fletcher on the basis of metrical tests *par excellence,*—so surprisingly novel and seductively convincing were the tests then recently formulated. Swinburne's mistakes are of sane omission rather than of supererogation. By his judgments as a critic one can not always swear; but here he is, in the main, marvelously right, and a thousand times rather to be followed than some of the successors of Fleay who have swamped the personality of Beaumont by heaping on

him, foundered, sods from a dozen turf-stacks which he never helped to build.

But the *chorizontes* — those who would separate every scene and line of the one genius from those of the other — are not lightly to be spoken of. It is only by combining their methods of analysis with the intuitions of the poet-critics that one may hope to see Frank Beaumont plain: "the worthiest and closest follower of Shakespeare in the tragic field; the earliest as well as ablest disciple of Ben Jonson in pure comedy, varied with broad farce and mock-heroic parody." The labour is well bestowed if by its means lovers of poetry and the drama, while not ceasing to admire the elder dramatist, Fletcher, may be led to accede at last to the younger his due and undivided honour, may come to speak of him by unhyphenated name — a personality of passion and of fire, a gracious power in poetry, of effulgent dramatic creativity; — if, like the ancients, they may protest occasionally in the name of Pollux alone.

CHAPTER II

BEAUMONT'S FAMILY; HIS EARLY YEARS: GRACE-DIEU, OXFORD

FRANCIS BEAUMONT, the dramatist, came of the younger line of an ancient and distinguished family of Anglo-Norman descent in which there had been Barons de Beaumont from the beginning of the fourteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century. They lived, as did the dramatist later, in the forest of Charnwood in Leicestershire,— part of the old forest of Arden. And it is of a ride to their family seat that John Leland, the antiquary, speaks when in his itinerary, written between 1535 and 1543, he says: "From Leicester to Brodegate, by ground well wooded three miles. . . . From Brodegate to Loughborough about a five miles. . . . First, I came out of Brodegate Park into the forest of Charnwood, commonly called the Waste. This great forest is a twenty miles or more in compass, having plenty of wood. . . . In this forest is no good town nor scant a village; Ashby-de-la-Zouche, a market town and other villages on the very borders of it. . . . Riding a little further I left the park of Beau Manor, closed with stone walls and a pretty lodge in it, belonging of late to Beaumonts. . . . There is a fair quarry of alabaster stone about a four miles from Leicester, and not very far

from Beau Manor.[1] . . . There was, since the Bellemonts [Beaumonts], earls of Warwick, a baron [at Beaumanoir] of great lands of that name; and the last of them in King Henry the Seventh's time was a man of simple wit. His wife was after married to the Earl of Oxford." [2] These barons "of great lands," living in Charnwood Forest,— where, as another old writer tells us, "a wren and a squirrel might hop from tree to tree for six miles; and in summer time a traveler could journey from Beaumanoir to Burden, a good twelve miles, without seeing the sun,"— these barons are the de Beaumonts, from the fourth of whom, John, Lord Beaumont, who died in 1396, our dramatist was descended.

The barony ran from father to son for six generations of alternating Henries and Johns, *c.* 1309 to 1460. John, fourth Baron, was grandson of Alianor, daughter of Henry, Earl of Lancaster, and so descended from Henry III and the first kings of the House of Plantagenet. The second Baron, husband of Alianor of Lancaster, was through his mother, Alice Comyn, descended from the Scotch Earls of Buchan, and thus connected with the Balliols and the royal House of Scotland; through his father, Henry, the first Baron de Beaumont, who died in 1343, he was great-grandson of John de Brienne, titular King of Jerusalem, 1210–1225.[3] In a quaint tetrastich in the church of Barton-upon-Humber, the memory of these alliances is thus preserved:

[1] Leland's *Itinerary,* Ed. L. T. Smith, Vol. I, 18-19.
[2] Leland's *Itinerary,* Ed. L. T. Smith, Vol. IV, 126.
[3] Collins, *Peerage of England,* IX, 460.

Rex Hierosolymus cum Bellomonte locatur,
Bellus mons etiam cum Baghan consociatur,
Bellus mons iterum Longicastro religatur,
Bellus mons . . . Oxonie titulatur.[1]

The sixth Baron became, in 1440, the first Viscount of English creation; he married a granddaughter of the Lord Bardolph of Shakespeare's *2 Henry IV;* but with his son "of simple wit," who died in 1507, the viscounty died out. Beaumanoir to the east of Charnwood is seven miles north of Leicester and nine from Coleorton where, west of the Forest, an older branch of the Beaumont family of which we shall hear, later, continued to live and is living to-day; and the old barony was revived, in 1840, in a descendant of the female line, Miles Thomas Stapleton, as ninth Baron Beaumont.

The grandfather of the dramatist, John Beaumont, was in the third generation from Sir Thomas Beaumont, the younger son of the fourth Lord Beaumont. John evidently had to make his way before he could establish himself near the old home in Leicestershire; but he must have had some competence and position from the first, for he was admitted early, in the reign of Henry VIII, a member of the Inner Temple; in 1537 and 1543 he performed the learned and expensive functions of Reader, or exponent of the law in that society, and later was elected treasurer or presiding officer of the house. He started brilliantly in his profession. In 1529 he was counsellor for the corporation of Leicester; and, by 1539, he had means or

[1] J. Nichols, *Collections toward the History of Leicestershire* (*Biblioth. Topogr. Brit.*, VII, 534). See, below, Appendix, A.

uence sufficient to secure for himself the old Nun- y of Grace-Dieu in Charnwood Forest, which, as an esiastical commissioner he had four years earlier ed to suppress. That he entered into possession, ever, only with difficulty, is manifest from a letter ch he wrote in 1538 to Lord Cromwell, enclosing as a present and beseeching his lordship's interces- with the king that he may be confirmed in his ership of the "demenez" as against the cupidity George, first Earl of Huntingdon, who "doth labour ake the seyd abbey ffrom me; . . . for I do ffeyre seyd erle and hys sonnes do seeke my lyffe." [1] He upied various important legal and administrative tions in the county, and, shortly before the death Edward VI, was appointed to the high office of ter of the Rolls, or Judge of the Court of Ap- . A year or two later, however, early in 1553, was removed from his seat on the bench, for lcation and other flagrant breach of trust. He imprisoned and fined in all his property, died the next year. His vast estates were be- ed on Francis, Earl of Huntingdon, by Edward but soon afterward, as a result of legal manœuvre by the assistance of that Earl and his eldest son, widow of the Master of the Rolls contrived to in the manor of Grace-Dieu; and it long continued e the country seat of the Beaumonts.[2] This pru- , strenuous, and high-born lady, Elizabeth Hast-

[1] *Letters relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries,* pp. 52, Camden Society, 1843. The editor, Thos. Wright, de- es the petitioner as of Thringston, Co. Leicester.

[2] M. Rigg, *Dict. Nat. Biog.* art., *John Beaumont;* and ols's *History of Leicestershire,* III, ii, 651, *et. seq.*

ings, was the daughter of Sir William Hastings, a younger son of the incorruptible William, Lord Hastings, whom in 1483 Richard of Gloucester had decapitated. Her grandmother, Catherine Nevil, was daughter to the Earl of Salisbury, who died at Pomfret, and sister to Richard, Earl of Warwick, the Kingmaker. Elizabeth's aunt, Anne Hastings, was the wife of George Talbot, fourth Earl of Shrewsbury, and her uncle, Edward, was the second Lord Hastings. Edward's children, our Elizabeth's first cousins, were Anne, Countess to Thomas Stanley, second Earl of Derby, and that George, first Earl of Huntingdon, whom, with certain of his five sons, the master of Grace-Dieu "ffeyred."[1] We may conjecture that the feud expired with the marriage of Elizabeth Hastings and John Beaumont, or with the death of the first Earl in 1544; and that the policy of his successors, Francis and Henry, in securing to the Huntingdon family the reversion of the forfeited estates of the Master of the Rolls and, later, releasing a portion of them to Elizabeth, was dictated by cousinly affection.

The great Francis, second Earl of Huntingdon, lived in the castle of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, about an hour's walk from Mistress Beaumont's, and had, in 1532, allied himself to royalty by marrying Katherine Pole, niece of the Cardinal, and great-granddaughter of that George, Duke of Clarence (brother to Edward IV), who was "pack'd with post-horse up to heaven" by the cacodemon of Gloucester. When Edward VI died, Francis declared for Lady Jane Grey and

[1] Collins, *Peerage*, VI, 648, *et seq.*; H. N. Bell, *The Huntingdon Peerage*, 1821. See also, below, Appendix, Table B.

was for a time imprisoned. His daughter was the beautiful Lady Mary Hastings who, being of the blood royal, was wooed for the Czar, and might have been "Empress of Muscovy" had she pleased. From the Huntingdon family Elizabeth Hastings introduced at least one new christian name into that of the Beaumonts. For the second Earl, she named her oldest son Francis. One of her daughters, Elizabeth, became the wife of William, third Lord Vaux of Harrowden, in the adjoining county of Northampton; and thus our dramatist, through his aunt, was connected with another of the proudest Norman families of England,— one of the most devoted to the Catholic faith and, as we shall see, active in Jesuit interests that during the dramatist's life in London assumed momentous political proportions. Aunt Elizabeth, Lady Vaux, died before our Frank Beaumont was born; and her son Henry died when Frank was but ten years of age,— but in an entry in the State Papers of 1595 concerning "the entail of Lord Vaux's estates on his children by his first wife [John] Beaumont's daughter," [1] several "daughters" are mentioned. These, his cousins of Harrowden, Frank knew from his youth up. In 1605 all England was to be ringing with their names.

John and Elizabeth were succeeded at Grace-Dieu by their son, Francis. He was a student at Peterhouse, Cambridge; afterwards, at the Inner Temple, where like his father before him, he proceeded Reader and Bencher. In 1572 he sat in Parliament as member for Aldborough; in 1589 he was made sergeant-

[1] *Calendar of State Papers (Domestic)*, 1595, p. 154.

at-law; and in 1593 was appointed one of the Queen's Justices of the Court of Common Pleas. His method of trying a case, technical and merciless, may be studied in the minutes of the Lent assizes of 1595 at which the unfortunate Jesuit priest, Henry Walpole, was sentenced to death for returning to England.[1] His career on the bench was both successful and honourable; and he is described by a contemporary, William Burton, the author of the *Description of Leicestershire,* as a 'grave, learned, and reverend judge." He married Anne, the daughter of a Nottinghamshire knight, Sir George Pierrepoint of Holme-Pierrepoint; and their children were Henry, born 1581; John, born about 1583; Francis, the subject of this study, born in 1584 or 1585; and Elizabeth, some four years younger than Francis.[2] That we know nothing of the life or personality of this mother of poets, is a source of regret. Her family, however, was of a notable stock possessed, immediately after the Conquest, of lands in Sussex under Earl Warren. Their estate of Holme-Pierrepoint in Nottinghamshire they had inherited from Michael de Manvers during the reign of Edward I. Anne's ancestors had been Knights Banneret, and of the Carpet and the Sword, for generations. Her brother, Sir Henry Pierrepoint, born 1546, married Frances, the eldest daughter of the Sir William Cavendish who began the building of Chatsworth, and

[1] Challoner, *Missionary Priests,* I, 347.

[2] For the preceding details, and some of those which follow, see the respective articles in the *Dictionary of National Biography;* Dyce's *Works of Beaumont and Fletcher,* Vol. I, *Biographical Memoir;* Grosart, *Sir John Beaumont's Poems,* and the sources as indicated. See also, below, Appendix, Table C.

his redoubtable Lady, Bess of Hardwick, who finished it. This aunt of the young Beaumonts of Grace-Dieu, Lady Pierrepoint, was sister to William Cavendish, first Earl of Devonshire in 1611 and forefather of the present Dukes,—to Henry Cavendish, the friend of Mary, Queen of Scots, and son-in-law of her kindly custodian, George Talbot, sixth Earl of Shrewsbury,—to Sir Charles Cavendish, whose son, William, became Earl, and then Duke of Newcastle,—to Elizabeth Cavendish, Countess of Lennox, the wife of Henry Darnley's brother, Charles Stuart, and the mother of James I's hapless cousin, Lady Arabella Stuart,—and to Mary Cavendish, Countess of Shrewsbury, wife of Gilbert, seventh Earl. The son of Sir Henry and Lady Pierrepoint, Robert, born in the same year as his cousin, Francis Beaumont, the dramatist, married a daughter of the Talbots, became in due time Viscount Newark and Earl of Kingston, and was killed in 1643 during the Civil War. From him descended Marquises of Dorchester and Dukes of Kingston, and the Earls Manvers of the present time. Through their mother, Anne Pierrepoint, the Beaumont children of Grace-Dieu were, accordingly, connected with several of the most influential noble families of England and Scotland; and in their comradeship with the cousins of Holme-Pierrepoint they would, as of the common kin, be thrown into familiar acquaintance with the children of the various branches of these and other houses that I might mention.[1] Holme-Pierpoint is seventeen miles north-

[1] See Shaw's *Knights of England;* Collins, *Peerage;* and articles in *D. N. B.* under names.

east of Grace-Dieu, near the city of Nottingham, in the red sand-stone country along the River Trent. The Park is but a two or three hours' drive from Charnwood, and the old house to which Anne used to take her children to see their grandparents still stands, altered only in part from what it was in 1580. It belongs to the Earl Manvers of to-day. In the church is the tomb of the poet's uncle, Sir Henry Pierrepoint, who died the year before Francis.

Since no entry of Francis' baptism has been discovered it is uncertain whether he was born at Grace-Dieu. The probabilities are, however, in favour of that birth-place, since his father was not continuously occupied in London until a later date. As to the exact year of his birth, there is also uncertainty but I think that the records indicate 1584. The matriculation entry in the registers of Oxford University describes him as twelve years of age at the time of his admission, February 4, 1597 (new style), which would establish the date of his birth between February 1584 and February 1585. The funeral certificate issued at the time of his father's death, April 22, 1598, speaks of the other children, Henry, John, and Elizabeth as, respectively, seventeen, fourteen, and nine, years of age, "*or thereaboutes*"; but of Francis as "of thirteen yeares *or more*."

Justice Beaumont was a squire of considerable means. When, in 1581, he qualified himself to be Bencher by lecturing at the Inner Temple upon some statute or section of a statute for the space of three weeks and three days, his expenses for the entertainment at table or in revels, alone, must have run to about

£1500, in the money of to-day. He held at the time of his death landed estates in some ten parishes of Leicestershire, between Sheepshead on the east and and Coleorton three miles away on the west, and scattered over some seven miles north and south between Belton and Normanton. In Derby, too, he had two or three fine manors. His will shows that he was able to make generous provision for many of his "ould and faythefull servauntes," besides bequeathing specifically a handsome sum in money to his daughter Elizabeth. He was a considerate and careful man, too, for the morning of his death he added a codicil to his will: "I have left somewhat oute of my will which is this, I will that my daughter Elizabeth have all the jewells that were her mother's." His sons are not mentioned, for naturally the heir, Henry, would make provision for John and Francis.[1] His chief executor was Henry Beaumont of Coleorton, his kinsman,— worth mentioning here; for at Coleorton another cousin, Maria Beaumont, the mother of the great Duke of Buckingham, had till recently lived as a waiting gentlewoman in the household.

Grace-Dieu where the youth of these children was principally spent, was "beautifully situated in what was formerly one of the most recluse spots in the centre of Charnwood Forest," within a little distance of the turn-pike road that leads from Ashby-de-la-

[1] Dyce says that the Judge was knighted; so Rigg (*D. N. B.*) and others. The *Inner Temple Records* speak of him thirty times, but only once, Nov. 5, 1581, as "Sir," though others in memoranda running to 1601 which mention him are given the title. In the codicil to his will he is plain "Mr. Beaumont"; and he is not included in Shaw's *Knights of England.*

Zouch to Loughborough. It lies low in a valley, near the river Soar. In his *Two Bookes of Epigrammes and Epitaphs,* 1639, Thomas Bancroft gives us a picture of the spot:

Grace-Dieu, that under Charnwood stand 'st alone,
As a grand relicke of religion,
I reverence thine old, but fruitfull, worth,
That lately brought such noble Beaumonts forth,
Whose brave heroicke Muses might aspire
To match the anthems of the heavenly quire:
The mountaines crown'd with rockey fortresses,
And sheltering woods, secure thy happiness
That highly favour'd art (tho' lowly placed)
Of Heaven, and with free Nature's bounty graced.

And still another picture of it is painted, a hundred and seventy years later by Wordsworth, the friend of the Sir George Beaumont who in his day was possessed of the old family seat of Coleorton Hall, within half an hour's walk of Grace-Dieu: —

Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground
Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
The ivied Ruins of forlorn Grace-Dieu,—
Erst a religious house, which day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite:
And when those rites had ceased, the Spot gave birth
To honourable Men of various worth:
There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager child:
There, under shadow of the neighboring rocks,
Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;
Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams

Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,
With which his genius shook the buskined stage.
Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unhallowed lie;
They perish;—but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that ne'er decays.[1]

So far as the "youthful tales of shepherds" go, Wordsworth is probably thinking of the verses of Francis' brother, Sir John, which open:

A shepherdess, who long had kept her flocks
On stony Charnwood's dry and barren rocks,—

written long after both brothers had left boyhood behind; indeed after Francis was dead; or he is attributing to our Beaumont a share in Fletcher's *Faithfull Shepheardesse*. Francis, himself, has given us nothing of the pastoral vein, save sweet snatches in the dramas "with which his genius shook the buskined stage."

There is no doubt that from childhood up, the brothers and, as I shall later show, their sister Elizabeth breathed an atmosphere of literature and national life. At an early age John was sufficiently confessed a versifier to be assigned the Prelude to one of the nobly patronized Michael Drayton's *Divine Poems*, and there is fair reason for believing that the younger brother Francis was writing and publishing verses in 1602, when he was barely eighteen years of age. Their father was going to and fro among the great in London who made affairs. The country-side all about them was replete with historic memories and

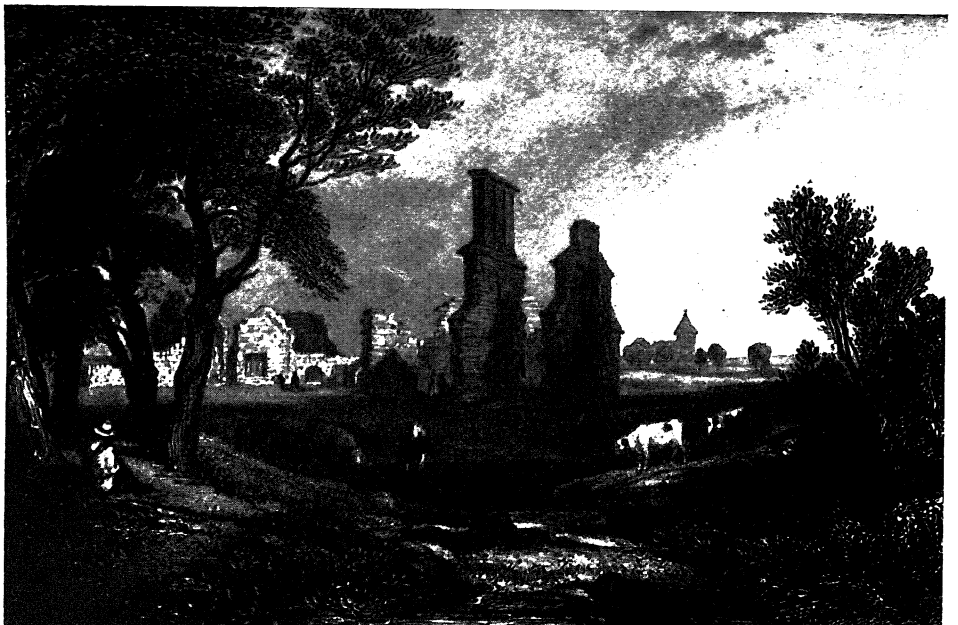
[1] *For a Seat in the Groves of Coleorton.*

inspirations to poetry. In the Grey Friars' at Leicester, eleven miles south-east, Simon de Montfort allied by marriage to the first Anglo-Norman de Beaumonts, Earls of Leicester, lay buried. There, too, until his ashes were scattered on the waters of the Soar, King Richard the Third. In the Blue Boar Inn of that "toune,"— in our young Beaumont's day, all "builded of tymbre,"— this last of the Plantagenets had spent the night before the battle of Bosworth. The field itself on which the battle was fought lies but eight miles west of Leicester and about nine south of Grace-Dieu. No wonder that Francis Beaumont's brother John in after days chose Bosworth Field as the subject of an heroic poem:

> The Winter's storme of Civill Warre I sing,
> Whose end is crown'd with our eternall Spring;
> Where Roses joyn'd, their colours mixe in one,
> And armies fight no more for England's Throne.

The Beaumonts were living in the centre of the counties most engaged. Three of their predecessors had fallen fighting for the red rose, John Beaumont of Coleorton and John, Viscount Beaumont, at Northampton in 1460, and a Henry Beaumont at Towton in 1461. In his description of the battle, John introduces by way of simile a reference to what may have been a familiar scene about Grace-Dieu:

> Here Stanley and brave Lovell trie their strength . . .
> So meete two bulls upon adjoyning hills
> Of rocky Charnwood, while their murmur fills
> The hollow crags, when striving for their bounds,
> They wash their piercing hornes in mutuall wounds.



Steel Engraving by W. Finden

THE RUINS OF GRACE-DIEU NUNNERY

Lovell, himself, was a Beaumont on the mother's side. And the poet takes occasion to pay tribute, also, to his own most famous ancestor on the grandmother's side, the "noble Hastings," first baron, whose cruel execution in *Richard III,* Shakespeare had dramatized more than twenty years before John wrote.

Just south of Charnwood Forest stood, in the day of John and Francis, the Manor House in Bradgate Park where Lady Jane Grey was born, and where she lived from 1549 to 1552 while she was being educated by her ambitious father and mother, the Marquis and Marchioness of Dorset, "to occupy the towering position they felt assured she would sooner or later be called to fill"— that of Protestant queen of England. Here it was that Roger Ascham, as he tells us in his *Schoolmaster,* after inquiring for the Lady Jane of the Marquis and his lady who were out hunting in Charnwood Forest, came upon the twelve-year old princess in her closet "reading the *Phædon* of Plato in Greek, with as much delight as gentlemen read the merry tales of Boccaccio." The grandmother of the young Beaumonts, who was still alive in 1578, may have lived long enough to take our Francis on her knee and tell him of the hopes her Protestant kinsmen of Ashby-de-la-Zouch had fixed upon the Lady Jane, and of how her cousin, the Earl, Francis of Huntington, had been one of those who in Royal Council in June 1553, abetted the Dukes of Northumberland and Suffolk in the scheme to secure the succession of Lady Jane to the throne, and how, with these dukes and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and other lords and gentlemen (among

a certain Sir John Baker of Sissinghurst, Kent,
se family later appears in this narrative), he
signed the "devise" in accordance with which
was proclaimed Queen. And the old lady
ld with bated breath tell him of the cruel fate of
nine-days' queen. Of how Francis of Hunting-
was sent to the Tower with Queen Jane, she also
ld tell. But perhaps not much of how he shortly
e his peace with Queen Mary, hunted down the
Jane's father, and brought him to the scaffold.
either their grandmother or their father, the
ge, could tell them of the night in 1560 on which
cousin, Henry, third Earl of Huntingdon, had
rtained in the castle "rising on the very borders"
he forest to the east, Mary, Queen of Scots, when
was on her way to her captivity in the house of
her connection of theirs, Henry Cavendish, at Tut-
in the county of Stafford, just east of them.

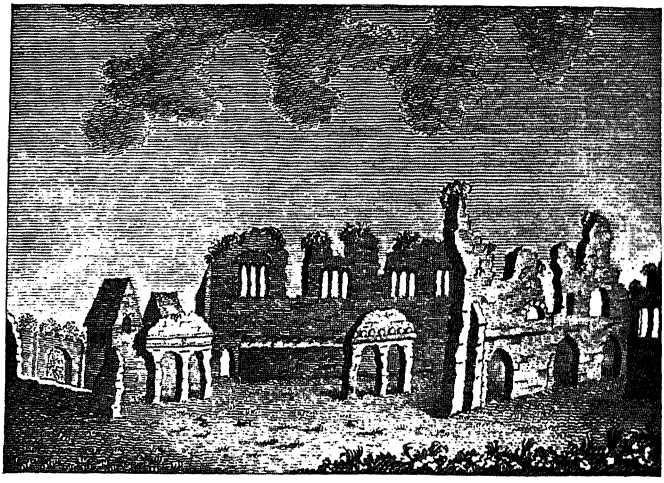
the history of culture not only John and Francis,
the Beaumonts in general are illustrious. In
ous branches and for generations the poetic,
larly, and artistic vein has persisted. John
umont's son and heir, the second Sir John, edited
father's poems, and lived to write memorial verses
Ben Jonson, and on Edward King, Milton's
cidas"; and another son, Francis, wrote verses.
elative and namesake of the dramatist's father,—
rwards Master of Charterhouse,—wrote an Epis-
prefixed to Speght's *Chaucer*, 1598; and still an-
r more distant relative, Dr. Joseph, Master of Pe-
ouse, and author of the epic allegory, *Psyche*, was
of the poetic imitators through whom Spenser's

influence was conveyed to Milton. The Sir George Beaumont of Wordsworth's day to whom reference has already been made was celebrated by that poet both as artist and patron of art. And, according to Darley,[1] Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was of the race and maiden name of our dramatist's mother, Anne Pierrepoint. From which coincidence one may, if he will, argue poetic blood on that side of the family, too; or from Grosart's derivation of Jonathan Edwards from that family, polemic blood, as well.

The three sons of Justice Beaumont of Grace-Dieu were entered on February 4, 1597, at Broadgates Hall, now Pembroke, which at that time was one of the most flourishing and fashionable institutions in Oxford. These young gentlemen-commoners were evidently destined for the pursuit of the civil and common law, since, as Dyce informs us, their Hall was then the principal nursery for students of that discipline. But one cannot readily visualize young Frank, not yet thirteen, or his brother John, a year or so older, devoting laborious hours to the *Corpus Juris* in the library over the south aisle of St. Aldate's Church, or to their Euclid, Strabo, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian. We see them, more probably, slipping across St. Aldate's street to Wolsey's gateway of Christ Church, and through the, then unfinished, great quadrangle, past Wolsey's tower in the southeast corner, and, by what then served for the Broad Walk, to what now are called the Magdalen College School cricket grounds, and so to some well-moored boat on the flooded meadows by the Cherwell. And some days,

[1] *Works of B. and F.*, XVI.

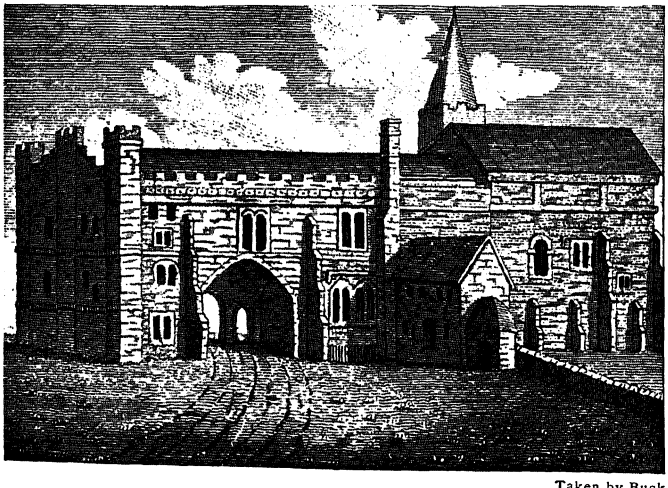
they would have under arm or in pocket a tattered volume of Ovid, preferably in translation,— Turberville's *Heroical Epistles,* or Golding's rendering of the *Metamorphoses,*— or Painter's *Palace of Pleasure,* or Fenton's *Tragical Discourses* out of Bandello, dedicated to the sister of Sir Philip Sidney — Sir Philip, whose daughter young Francis should, one day, revere and celebrate in noble lines. Or they would have Harington's *Orlando Furioso* to wonder upon; or some cheap copy of *Amadis* or *Palmerin* to waken laughter. And, other days, fresh quartos of *Tamburlaine* and *Edward II* and *Dido,* or Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* and Lyly's *Gallathea,* or Greene's *Frier Bacon* and *James IV,* or Shakespeare's *Richard II,* and *Richard III,* and *Romeo and Juliet,* and *Love's Labour's Lost.* These, with alternate shuddering and admiring, mirth or tears, to declaim and in imagination re-enact. And certainly there would be mellow afternoons when the *Songs and Sonnettes* known as *Tottel's Miscellany* and *The Paradyse of Daynty Devises,* with their poems of love and chivalry by Thomas, Lord Vaux,— of which they had often heard from their cousins of Harrowden,— and Chapman's completion of *Hero and Leander* or Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis,* and Drayton's fantastic but graceful *Endimion and Phoebe* would hold them till the shadows were well aslant, and the candles began to wink them back to the Cardinal's quadrangle and the old refectory, beyond, of Broadgates Hall. For the Char and the boats were there then, and all these El Dorados of the mind were to be had in quarto or other form, and some of them were appear-



View taken by Buck in 1730

RUINS OF GRACE-DIEU

Note: After Buck's time the ruins were "carried away to mend the roads"
See John Throsby, *Select Views of Leicestershire*, Vol. II, 461



Taken by Buck

A PRIORY, ULVESTON, EXTANT IN 1730

ing first in print in the year when Frank and his brothers entered Oxford.

We may be sure, that many a time these brothers and sworn friends in literature, and Henry, too, loyal young Elizabethans,— and with them, perhaps, their cousin, Robert Pierrepoint, who was then at Oriel,— strolled northwest from the Cherwell toward Yarnton, and then Woodstock with its wooded slopes, to see the island where Queen Elizabeth, when but princess, had been imprisoned for a twelvemonth, and, hearing a milk-maid singing, had sighed, "She would she were a milkmaid as she was"; and that they took note of fair Rosamund's well and bower, too. They may have tramped or ridden onward north to Banbury, and got there at the same cakeshop in Parsons Street the same cakes we get now. Or, some happy Michaelmas, they would have walked toward the fertile Vale of Evesham, north, first, toward Warwickshire where at Compton Scorpion Sir Thomas Overbury, the ill-fated friend of their future master, Ben Jonson, was born, and on by the village of Quinton but six miles from Shakespeare's Stratford, toward Mickleton and the Malvern Hills; and then, turning toward the Cotswolds, to Winchcombe with its ancient abbey and its orchards, to see just south of it Sudely Castle where Henry VIII's last wife, the divorced Catherine Parr, had lived and died,— where Giles, third Baron Chandos, had entertained Queen Bess, and where in their time abode the Lord William. With this family of Brydges, Barons Chandos, the lads were acquainted, if not in 1597 at any rate after 1602, when the fifth Baron, Grey,

succeeded to the title. For, writing *Teares* on the death of that hospitable "King of the Cotswolds," which occurred in 1621, John Beaumont describes him with the admiration begotten of long intimacy,— "the smoothnesse of his mind," "his wisdome and his happy parts," and "his sweet behaviour and discourse."

Or,— and how could any young Oxonian fail of it? — they started from Broadgates, down the High, crossed Magdalen Bridge, where the boats were lazily oaring below them, and set out for the climb to Rose Hill; then down by sleepy ways to Littlemore, and to Sandford; then up the two long sharp ascents to Nuneham,— where now, in the fine old manor house, hangs Frank's own portrait in oils, — one of the two contemporary likenesses of him that exist to-day.

CHAPTER III

AT THE INNS OF COURT AND CHANCERY; THE POEMS ASSIGNED TO THESE EARLIER YEARS.

THE career of the Beaumonts at the University was shortened by the death of their father, some fourteen months after their admission. Henry had been entered of the Inner Temple, November 27, 1597, at his father's request. Some say with John, but I do not find the latter in the Records. Francis may have remained at Oxford until 1600. On November 3 of that year, he, also, was admitted a member of the Inner Temple, his two brothers acting as sponsors for him. We notice from the admission-book that he was matriculated *specialiter, gratis, comitive,*— because his father had been a Bencher,— was excused from most of the ordinary duties and charges, and was permitted to take his meals and to lodge outside the Inn of Court itself. I gather that, like other young students at the time, he lodged and pursued his studies in one of the lesser Inns, called Inns of Chancery, attached to the Inner Temple and under its supervision: Clifford's Inn across Fleet Street; or, across the Strand, Lyon's Inn,— or, let us hope, by preference, Clement's Inn; where had lain Jack Falstaff in the days when he was "page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk," and

was seen by lusty Shallow to "break Skogan's head at the court-gate when 'a was a crack not thus high;" where had boozed Shallow himself and his four friends—"not four such swinge-bucklers in all the Inns of Court again"; and where, no doubt, they were talking in Beaumont's day "of mad Shallow yet."

In 1600, the Inns of Chancery lodged about a hundred students each, and served as preparatory schools for the Inns of Court. At one of these lesser Inns[1] Beaumont would acquire some elementary knowledge of civil procedure by copying writs of the Clerks of Chancery, would listen to a reader sent over by the Inner Temple to lecture, and would be "bolted," or sifted, in the elements of law by the "inner" or junior barristers; and he would attend "moots" over which senior or "utter" barristers presided. At the end of about two years or earlier, if he proved a promising scholar, he would be transferred to the Inn of Court, itself. We may assume that about 1602, Beaumont would be sitting in Clerks' Commons in the Hall of the Inner Temple. Bread and beer for breakfast,—provided on only four days of the week. At 12 o'clock he would be summoned to dinner by the blowing of a horn,—"thou horne of hunger that cal'st the inns a court to their manger." For his mess of meat,—in Lent, fish,—on other occasions, loins of mutton, or beef,—he would make himself a trencher of bread. At 6 or 7 o'clock would

[1] *Inns of Court and Chancery* (Lond., 1912), p. 45; W. R. Douthwaite, *Gray's Inn, its History and Associations* (Lond., 1886), pp. 36, 78, 253. For the Beaumonts, and what follows, see, also, Inderwick, *Inner Temple Records* (Lond. 1896), I, 421; II, 435; Introductions, and subjects as indexed.

come supper,— bread and beer again. After dinner, and again after supper, he would enjoy bolts and exercises conducted by the utter barristers, day in and day out through nearly the whole year. As he advanced in proficiency he would appear as a "moot-man" in the arguments presented before the Benchers, or governing fellows, seated as judges. And perhaps he resigned himself, meanwhile, to the proper wear within the Inn, which was cap and gown, "but the fashion was to wear hats, cloaks or coats, swords, rapiers, boots and spurs, large ruffs and long hair. Even Benchers were found to sit in Term Time with hats on." [1]

Whether Beaumont gave promise or not we are ignorant. The routine of the Inn was impeccable; but students and benchers were not. There were not infrequently other exercises than "moots" after supper: cards and stage-plays, revels and sometimes riots. This much we know, that before young Frank could have fulfilled his seven or more years as student and "moot-man," he was already in the rank of poets and dramatists. But, that by no means precludes his continuance for several years, perhaps till 1608, in the juridical university, or his intimate association with and residence in the stately old quadrangles of what would be his college,— the Inner Temple. And for a young man of his temperament the atmosphere was as poetic as juridical. The young man's fancy was fired by the poetry and the drama that for centuries had enlivened the graver pursuits of the Gothic halls that rose between Fleet Street and the Thames,

[1] *Inns of Court, etc.*, p. 163.

Whitefriars and Paget Place,—"the noblest nurseries of humanity and liberty in the kingdom," as Ben Jonson calls them in his dedication[1] to the Inns of Court of *Every Man out of his Humour*, first published in the year when Beaumont entered.

According to Aubrey, while the garden-wall of Lincoln's Inn, close by, was building, a Bencher of that society "walking thro' and hearing" a young bricklayer "repeat some Greek verses out of Homer, discoursed with him, and finding him to have a witt extraordinary gave him some exhibition to maintaine him at Trinity College, Cambridge." That young bricklayer was, later, Beaumont's friend and master, Ben Jonson. Lincoln's Inn had long been a nursing mother to dramatic effort. At the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign it was one of its members, Richard Edwardes, who, as Master of the Chapel Children, produced the "tragicall comedie" *Damon and Pythias*, and the tragedy of *Palamon and Arcite*, to the great edification of the Queen, and the permanent improvement of the Senecan style of drama by the fusion of the ideal and the commonplace, of the romantic, the serious, and the humorous in an appeal to popular interest. "He was highly valued," this Edwardes, "by those that knew him," says Anthony Wood, "especially his associates in Lincoln's Inn." And it was in the Middle Temple, just fourteen months after Beaumont joined the Inns of Court, that Manningham, one of the barristers, witnessed the performance for the Reader's Feast on Candlemas Day of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. If Beaumont of the In-

[1] The Dedication first appears in the folio of 1616.

mple, within a stone's throw, did not hear more
he applause, he was not our Frank Beaumont.
ay be sure that he had sauntered through the
e Gardens many an afternoon, and knew the
mortalized by Marlowe and that same Shakes-
as the scene of the quarrel between Plantagenet
omerset when the white and red roses were
, and that he would hear Shakespeare when he

much as the Middle Temple and Lincoln's
ed the drama and costly entertainments on the
feast-days, they were outdone in Christmas
and masques and plays by the closely affiliated
s of Gray's Inn and the Inner Temple. Be
these Houses, says Mr. Douthwaite, the his-
of the former, "there appears anciently to have
a kindly union, which is shown by the fact that
great gate of the gardens of the Inner Temple
seen to this day [1880] the 'griffin' of Gray's
hilst over the great gateway in Gray's Inn
is carved in bold relief the 'winged horse'
Inner Temple." The two societies had long
m of combining for the production of the
shows; and as we shall see, they com-
ome thirteen years after Beaumont entered the
Temple in the production at Court of one of
st glorious and expensive masques ever pre-
in London, Beaumont's own masque for the
g of the Elector Palatine and the Princess
th. They were influential as patrons of the
rama, and as producers of amateur dramatists.
nturies Gray's Inn had permitted "revels"

after six o'clock supper of bread and beer; and when Beaumont was of the Inner Temple close by, there was a Grand Week at Gray's in every term. "They had revels and masques some of which," as a member of that society has recently said, "have never been forgotten, and I think cannot be forgotten while English history lasts." [1] From a very early date, perhaps not long after the society was established in Edward the Third's reign in the old manor of Portpool, "they were addicted at the Christmas season to a great outburst of revelry of every kind. The revelings began at All Hallows; at Christmas a Prince of Portpoole was appointed; who was also Lord of Misrule, and he kept things gaily alive through Christmas and until toward the end of January." These and other disguises, masques, and mummeries, are lineal descendants of the mummings of the Ancient Order of the Coif, such as regaled King Richard II at Christmas 1389; and, amalgamated with St. George plays and other folk-shows and even with sword-dances, they influenced the course of rural drama throughout the realm. It may be a bow drawn at a venture but I cannot withhold the suspicion that the Lord of Pool of the *Revesby Sword-Play* and of other popular compositions derives from the historic Prince of Misrule of the Gray's Inn Christmas revels. It was George Gascoigne of Gray's Inn who by a translation from Ariosto introduced the Renaissance treatment of the Greek New Comedy and the Latin Comedy into England with his *Supposes* in 1566, and in the same year,

[1] H. E. Duke, K.C., M.P., *Gray's Inn in Six Lectures on the Inns of Court and of Chancery*, 1912.

with Francis Kinwelmersh, produced at Gray's Inn an English rendering of Ludovico Dolce's *Giocasta,* a tragedy descended from Euripides' *Phoenissae* by way of a Latin version. "Altogether," remarks Professor Cunliffe,[1] "the play must have provided a gorgeous and exciting spectacle, and have produced an impression not unworthy of Gray's Inn, 'an House', the Queen said on another occasion, 'she was much beholden unto, for that it did always study for some sports to present unto her.'" To this house and to Gascoigne, Shakespeare, too, was beholden, for from the *Supposes* proceeds more or less directly the minor plot of *The Taming of the Shrew.* In 1588, Gray's Inn figures prominently again in the career of the pre-Shakespearian drama, with the production by one of its gentlemen, Thomas Hughes, of a tragedy of English legend and Senecan type, *The Misfortunes of Arthur,* played by the society before the Queen at Greenwich. And, in 1594, Gray's Inn connects itself with the Shakespearian drama directly by witnessing in the great hall in the Christmas season a play called *A Comedy of Errors,* "like to Plautus his *Menaechmus.*"

It is diverting to note that on the eve of just that season of 1594, a very pious woman, the second wife of Sir Nicholas Bacon, and the mother of Anthony and Francis, is writing to the elder brother "I trust that they will not mum nor sinfully make revel at Gray's Inn." Anthony was not a very strict Puritan, Francis still less so; and Francis, who had been of Gray's Inn since 1575, was, till his fall from power,

[1] *Early English Classical Tragedies,* Introduction, p. lxxxvi.

the keenest devotee and most ardent and reckless promoter of masquing that Gray's Inn or, for that matter, England, had ever known. According to Spedding,[1] the speeches of the six councillors for the famous court of the Prince of Purpoole in 1594 were written by him and him alone. He furnished the money and much of the device for gorgeous masques before Queen Elizabeth; and under her successor he was prime mover in many a masque, like that of the *Flowers,* presented by the gentlemen of Gray's Inn, in 1614, which, alone, cost him about £10,000 as reckoned in the money of to-day. The masques by the four Inns, in honour of the Elector Palatine's marriage, the year before, are said to have cost £20,000, — five hundred thousand dollars in the money of to-day! And it would appear that much of this expense was assumed by Sir Francis Bacon, who in the years of his greatness as Solicitor-General and Attorney-General retained intimate relations with the life of Gray's Inn, and whom our Beaumont during the years of studentship before 1603, when the gallant Sir Walter Raleigh was consigned to the Tower, must many times have seen strolling with Sir Walter in the walks that Bacon himself had laid out for his fellow-benchers of the Inn.

If Beaumont's family had deliberately set about preparing him for his career of poet and dramatist, especially of dramatist who, with John Fletcher, should vividly reproduce the life, manners and conversation of young men of fashion about town, they could not have placed him in a community more favourable to

[1] Letters and Life of Francis Bacon, I, 342.

these ends than that of the Inns of Court. As the name itself implies the members were gentlemen of the Court of the King. They must be "sons to persons of quality"; they must be trained to the possibility of appearance before the King at any time; they must be ready not merely as a privilege, but as a function, to entertain royalty upon summons. As Gray's Inn had its flavour of romance, its literary and dramatic history, its Sidney, its Bacon, its Gascoigne; so also the "anciently allied House" of the Inner Temple. There lingered the tradition, to say the least, of Chaucer's stirring poetry; there the spirit of Sir Francis Drake,— stirring romances of the Spanish main; there the memory of the Christmas revels of 1562 at which was first acted the *Gorboduc* of Thomas Sackville (afterwards Earl of Dorset, and connected by marriage with the Fletchers), and Thomas Norton,— whose "stately speeches and well sounding phrases, clyming to the height of Seneca his stile," whose national quality, romantic illumination of classical form, impressive, and novel dramatic blank verse were to influence imperishably the course of Elizabethan tragedy. There, too, had been produced, by five poets of the House, in 1568, "the first English love-tragedy that has survived," [1] *Gismond of Salerne,* a distant but unmistakable forerunner in tempestuous passion and pathos of plays in which young Beaumont was to compose the major part, *The Maides Tragedy* and *A King and No King.*

Here, in the intervals between moots and bolts in the day time or during the long evenings about the

[1] Cunliffe, *E. E. Class. Tragedies,* p. lxxxvi.

central fire in Hall or in Chambers, a young man of poetic proclivities would find ample opportunity to indulge his genius. And, even after he ceased to be an inmate, the Inner Temple would still be for him a club, in which by the payment of a small annual fee he might retain membership for life. And membership in one 'college' of this pseudo-university implied an honorary 'freedom' of the others. Beaumont would know not only William Browne, the poet of the Inner Temple from 1611 on, and all Browne's poetic fellows in that House, but Browne's less poetic friend, Christopher Brooke, counsel for Shakespeare's company of King's Players, who earlier in the century had entered Lincoln's Inn; and, also, Brooke's chamber-fellow, John Donne, whose secret marriage with the daughter of the Lieutenant of the Tower, in 1609, got the young scapegraces into jail. And at Gray's Inn Beaumont would be even more at home. It was the 'House' of his kinsman, Henry Hastings of Ashby,— in 1604 Earl of Huntingdon,— two years younger than Frank, and admitted as early as 1597; and of Robert Pierrepoint, who had come down with Frank from Oxford and was entered of the Inns at the same time; and, two years later, of Robert's cousin, William Cavendish, afterwards second Earl of Devonshire.

If we could be sure that a poem called *The Metamorphosis of Tabacco,* a mock-Ovidian poem of graceful style and more than ordinary wit, published in 1602, and ascribed by some one writing in a contemporary hand upon the title-page, to John Beaumont,

was John's we might regard the half dozen verses in praise of "thy pleasing rime," signed F. B., and beginning,

> My new-borne Muse assaies her tender wing,
> And where she should crie, is inforst to sing,—

as young Francis' earliest effort in rhyme. The dedication of the *Metamorphosis* to "my loving friend, Master Michael Drayton," favours the conjectured composition by John, for he is writing other complimentary poems to Drayton in the years immediately following 1602. But, though F. B.'s lines prefatory to the *Metamorphosis* are not unworthy of a fanciful youngster, they are negligible; as is the evidence of their authorship. Certain flimsy love-poems included in a volume published forty years later, twenty-four years after Beaumont's death, as of his composition, have also been attributed to his boyhood at the University, or at the Inner Temple. Most of them have been definitely traced to other authors, and of the rest of this class still unassigned there is no reason to believe that he was the author. In the same volume, however, there appears as by Beaumont a metrical tale based upon Ovid, called *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus,* of which we cannot be certain that he was not the author. The poem was first published, without name of writer, in 1602,[1] and was not assigned to Francis Beaumont until 1639, when Lawrence Blaiklock included it among the *Poems:* By Francis Beaumont, Gent., entered on the Stationers' Registers, September 2, and published,

[1] Reprinted by *Dramaticus, Sh. Soc. Pap.* III, 94 (1847).

1640. Blaiklock evidently printed from John Hodgets's edition of 1602, carelessly omitting here and there a line, and introducing absurd typographical mistakes. Either because he had private information that Beaumont was the author, or because he wished to profit by Beaumont's reputation, he goes so far as to sign the initials, F. B., to the verse dedication, *To Calliope,* and to alter the signature, A. F., appended to an introductory sonnet, *To the Author,* so as to read I. F. (suggesting John Fletcher.) These licenses, in addition to the reckless inclusion in the 1640 volume of several poems by authors other than Beaumont, vitiate Blaiklock's evidence. On the other hand, the original publisher, Hodgets, was the publisher also, in 1607, of *The Woman-Hater,* a play now reasonably accepted as by Beaumont, originally alone; and, in Hodgets's edition of the *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus,* one of the introductory sonnets is signed J. B., and another W. B. The 'J. B.' sonnet is not unworthy of Beaumont's brother John. And if the W. B. of the other verses, *In Laudem Authoris,* is William Basse,— who in a sonnet, written after Beaumont's death, speaks of him as "rare Beaumont,"— there is further justification for entertaining the possibility of Beaumont's authorship of the *Salmacis.* For Basse was one of the group of pastoralists to which Francis' friend Drayton, and Drayton's friend, William Browne, belonged,— a group with which Francis must have been acquainted. But of that we shall have more to say when we come to consider Beaumont's later connection with Drayton, and with the dramatic activities of the Inner Temple

t a time when Browne and other pastoralists were nembers of it. For the present it is sufficient to ay that Basse was himself issuing a pastoral romance n the year of *Salmacis,* 1602; and that he was by way of subscribing himself simply W. B.

The external evidence for Beaumont's authorship of this metrical tale is, at the best, but slight. As egards the internal, however, I cannot agree with Fleay and the author of the article entitled *Salmacis nd Hermaphroditus not by Beaumont.*[1] Both diction and verse display characteristics not foreign to Beaumont's heroic couplets in epistle and elegy, nor o the blank verse of his dramas,—though they do ot markedly distinguish them. The romantic-classical and idyllic grace may be the germ of that which lowers in the tragicomedies; and the joyous irony s not unlike that of *The Woman-Hater* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle.* The poem is a voluptuous and rambling expansion of the classical theme "which sweet-lipt Ovid long agoe did tell." The writer, like many a lad of 1602, has steeped himself n the amatory fable and fancy of Marlowe, Chapman, nd Shakespeare; and the passionate imaginings are such as characterize poetic lads of seventeen in any period. It is not impossible that here we have Francis Beaumont's earliest attempt at a poem of some proportions, and that he was stirred to it by exercises ike *The Endimion and Phoebe* of Drayton, probably by that time the friend of the Grace-Dieu family. Francis, indeed, need not have been ashamed of such a performance, for in spite of the erotic fervour and

[1] *Dramaticus,* (as above).

the occasional far-fetched conceits, the poet has visualized clearly the scenes of his mythological idyl, and enlivened the narrative with ingenuous humour; he has caught the figured style and something of the winged movement of his masters; and every here and there he has produced lines of more than imitative beauty:

> Looke how, when Autumne comes, a little space
> Paleth the red blush of the Summer's face,
> Searing the leaves, the Summer's covering,
> Three months in weaving by the curious Spring,—
> Making the grasse, his greene locks, go to wracke,
> Tearing each ornament from off his backe;
> So did she spoyle the garments she did weare,
> Tearing whole ounces of her golden hayre.

The earliest definite indication that I have found of Beaumont's literary activity, and of his recognition by poets, connects him with his brother John, and is highly suggestive in still other respects. John had already written, in 1603 or 1604, verses prefatory to Drayton's poetic treatment of *Moyses in a Map of his Miracles,* published in June of the latter year; and also, in 1605, to Drayton's revision of the *Barrons Wars.* On April 19, 1606, Drayton issued a volume entitled *Poems Lyrick and Pastoral,* which included with other verses a revision, under the name of *Eglogs,* of his *Idea, the Shepheard's Garland,* first published in 1593. In the eighth eclogue of this new edition, Drayton, writing of the ladies of his time to whom "much the Muses owe," adds to his praise of Sidney's (Elphin's) sister Mary, Countess of Pembroke, an en-

ium upon the two daughters of his early patron, Henry Goodere, Frances and Anne (Lady Rains-) ; then he celebrates a " dear Sylvia, one the best e," and

nen that dear nymph that in the Muses joys,
nat in wild Charnwood with her flocks doth go,
irtilla, sister to those hopeful boys,
y lovèd Thyrsis and sweet Palmeo;
That oft to Soar the southern shepherds bring,
Of whose clear waters they divinely sing.

o good she is, so good likewise they be,
s none to her might brother be but they,
or none a sister unto them, but she,—
o them for wit few like, I dare will say:
In them as Nature truly meant to show
How near the first, she in the last could go.

" golden-mouthed Drayton musical " had spent youth not many miles from " wild Charnwood," Polesworth Hall, the home of the Gooderes, in rwickshire. The dear nymph of Charnwood is abeth Beaumont, in 1606 a lass of eighteen,— and " hopeful boys " who bring the southern shep-ls (Jonson, perhaps, and young John Fletcher, as as Drayton) to their Grace-Dieu priory by the r Soar, are John, then about twenty-three, and future dramatist, about twenty-two.[1] Under the oral pseudonym of Mirtilla, Elizabeth is again orated by Drayton twenty-four years later, in his

[1] On these identifications, see Fleay, *Chron. Eng. Dr.*, I, 143-Elton, *Michael Drayton*, pp. 13, 58; Child, *Michael Drayton Camb. Hist. Lit.*, IV, 197, *et seq.*).

Muses Elizium. Since these Pastorals are in confessed sequence with those of "the prime pastoralist of England," and the pastoral Thyrsis and young Palmeo have already sung divinely of the clear waters of their native stream, it would appear that they too are disciples at that time of Master Edmund Spenser in his *Shepheards Calender.* And since these brothers, so like in wit and feature, and in charming devotion to their sister, are all the brothers that she has, it is evident that this portion of the *Eglog* was written after July 10, 1605; for up to that date, the eldest of the family, Henry, was still living, and at the manor house of Grace-Dieu. This friendship between Drayton and the "hopeful boys" continued through life; for, as we shall later note and more at length, in 1627, the year of John's death, and many years after that of Francis, the older poet still celebrates the twain as "My dear companions whom I freely chose My bosome-friends."

When James I made his famous progress from Edinburgh to London, April 5 to May 3, 1603, "every nobleman and gentleman kept open house as he passed. He spent his time in festivities and amusements of various kinds. The gentry of the counties through which his journey lay thronged in to see him. Most of them returned home decorated with the honours of knighthood, a title which he dispensed with a profusion which astonished those who remembered the sober days of Elizabeth." [1] One of those thus decorated was the poet's brother Henry, who was dubbed knight bachelor at Worksop in Derbyshire, on

[1] Gardiner, *Hist. Engl.* 1603-1607, p. 87.

the same day as his uncle, "Henry Perpoint of county Notts," and William Skipwith of Cotes in the Beaumont county — who appears later as a friend of Fletcher. Two days afterwards, Thomas Beaumont of Coleorton received the honour of knighthood at the Earl of Rutland's castle of Belvoir.[1]

Sir Henry of Grace-Dieu did not long enjoy his title. He died about the tenth of July 1605, and was buried on the thirteenth. By his will, witnessed by his brother Francis, and probated February 1606, Sir Henry left half of his private estate to his sister, Elizabeth "for her advancement in marriage," and the other half to be divided equally between John and Francis. He was succeeded as head of the family by John,[2] who later married a daughter of John Fortescue — also of a poetic race — and left by her a large family. The sister, Elizabeth (Mirtilla) probably continued to live at Grace-Dieu until her marriage to Thomas Seyliard of Kent. And that Francis occasionally came home on visits from London we have other proof than that afforded by Drayton. The provision of a competence made by Sir Henry's will leads us to conjecture that the subsequent dramatic activity of the younger brother was undertaken for sheer love of the art; and that, while his finances may have been occasionally at low ebb, the association in Bohemian *ménage* with John Fletcher, which followed the years of residence at the Inner Temple, was a matter of choice, not of poverty.

[1] Shaw's *Knights of Engl.*, Vol. II, under dates.

[2] Grosart (*D. N. B.* art. *John Beaumont*) says that John had been admitted to the Inner Temple with Henry. John does not appear in Inderwick.

CHAPTER IV

THE VAUX COUSINS AND THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

CERTAIN political events of the years 1603 to 1606 must have occasioned the young Beaumonts intimate and poignant concern. Their own family was, of course, Protestant, but it was closely connected by blood and matrimonial alliance with some of the most devoted and conspicuous Catholic families of England. Some of their Hastings kinsmen, sons of Francis, Earl of Huntingdon, were Catholics; and their first cousins, the Vauxes, whose home at Great Harrowden near by had been for over twenty years the harbourage of persecuted priests, were active Jesuits. After the death of his first wife,— Beaumont's aunt Elizabeth, who left four children, Henry, Eleanor, Elizabeth, and Anne,— William, Lord Vaux, had married Mary, the sister of the noble-hearted and self-sacrificing Catholic, Sir Thomas Tresham of Rushton in Northamptonshire; and this lady had brought up her own children, George and Ambrose, as well as the children of the first marriage, in strict adherence to the Roman faith and practice. Henry, the heir to the title, had been one of that zealous band of young Catholic gentlemen who received Fathers Campion and Persons on their arrival in England in 1580.[1] Before 1594, Henry, "that blessed

[1] John Morris, *Life of Father John Gerard*, p. 311, *et. seq.*

tleman and saint," as Father Persons calls him, had d, having resigned his inheritance of the Barony to brother George some years earlier in order to spend remaining days in celibacy, study, and prayer. In o, George, the elder son by the second marriage, taken to wife, Elizabeth Roper, also an ardent holic, the daughter of the future Lord Teynham. was left a widow in 1594 with an infant son, Edrd, whom she educated to maintain the Catholicity the family. In 1595, the old Baron, Beaumont's le, died —" the infortunatest peer of Parliament poverty that ever was " by reason of the fines and feitures entailed upon him for his religious zeal. anwhile, in 1591, we find the daughters of the first rriage, Eleanor, whose husband was an Edward okesby, of Arundel House, Leicestershire, and ne Vaux, concealing in a house in Warwickshire, well-known Father Gerard and his Superior, ther Garnet, from priest-hunters, or pursuivants. ese two cousins of Beaumont are described in ther Gerard's *Narrative* [1] as illustrious for goodness d holiness, " whom in my own mind I often compare the two women who received our Lord." The unger, Anne, " was remarkable at all times for her ginal modesty and shamefacedness, but in the cause God and the defence of His servants, the *virgo* came *virago*. She is almost always ill, but we have en her, when so weakened as to be scarce able to utter ee words without pain, on the arrival of the pursuints become so strong as to spend three or four hours contest with them. When she has no priest in the

[1] Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 113. See below, Appendix, Table D.

house she feels afraid; but the simple presence of a priest so animates her that then she makes sure that no devil has any power over her house." In the years that follow to 1605, the Vauxes are identified as recusants and as sympathizers with the untoward fortunes of Fathers Southwell, Walpole, Garnet, and others. In 1601, their kinsman and Frank Beaumont's, Henry Hastings, nephew to George, fourth Earl of Huntingdon, has joined the ranks and in 1602, we find him in a list of Jesuits "to be sought after" by the Earl of Salisbury,—"John Gerard with Mrs. Vaux and young Mr. Hastings." Father Gerard's headquarters in fact are from 1598 to 1605 with Mrs. Vaux and her son Edward, the young Baron, at Great Harrowden, and there others of the fifteen Jesuit fathers in England at that time, and prominent Catholics, such as Sir Oliver Manners, brother of Roger, Earl of Rutland, Sir Everard Digby, and Francis Tresham, a first cousin of Mrs. Vaux, were wont to foregather.

When James I came to the throne, the Catholics had hope of some alleviation of the penalties under which they laboured. Disappointed in this hope, the discontented, led by two priests, Watson and Clarke, embarked upon a wild scheme to kidnap the King and set as the price of his liberty the extension to Catholics of equal rights, religious, civil, and political, with the Protestants. The plot was betrayed, the priests executed, and the other leaders condemned to death,—then reprieved but attainted. Among those thus reprieved were Lord Grey de Wilton and "a confederate named Brookesby." This Brookesby was Bartholomew, the brother of Eleanor Vaux's husband. When

new and more stringent measures were immediately adopted for the repression of priests and recusants, the indignation of the Catholics reached a climax. "They saw," says Gardiner, "no more than the intolerable wrong under which they suffered; and it would be strange if there were not some amongst them who would be driven to meet wrong with violence, and to count even the perpetration of a great crime as a meritorious deed." [1]

In 1603 Father Gerard took a new house in London in the fields behind St. Clement's Inn,— just across the Strand from the Inner Temple where Francis Beaumont was living at the time. "This new house," says Gerard, "was very suitable and convenient and had private entrances on both sides, and I had contrived in it some most excellent hiding-places; and there I should have long remained, free from all peril or even suspicion, if some friends of mine, while I was absent from London, had not availed themselves of the house rather rashly." [2] These friends were Robert Catesby, a cousin of the Vauxes of Harrowden; his cousin, Thomas Winter; Winter's relative, John Wright, and Thomas Percy, a kinsman of Henry, ninth Earl of Northumberland,— all gentlemen of distinguished county families. In May 1604, these men with one Guy Fawkes of York and Scotton, a soldier of fortune and "excellent good natural parts," and, like the rest, fanatic with brooding over the wrongs of the Catholic Church, met at Father Gerard's house behind St. Clement's Inn, swore to keep secret the purpose of

[1] Gardiner, *Hist. Engl.* 1603–1642, I, 234.
[2] Morris, p. 360. See also, below, Appendix, Table D.

their meeting, received in an adjoining room the Sacrament from Father Gerard, an unwitting accomplice, in confirmation of their oath; and then, retiring, learned from Catesby that the project intended was to blow up the Parliament House with gunpowder when the King and the royal family next came to the House of Lords. Within a few days "Thomas Percy hired a howse at Westminster," says Fawkes in his subsequent Confession, "neare adjoyning Parlt. howse, and there wee beganne to make a myne about the XI of December, 1604." The rest of the story is too well-known to call for repetition. How the gunpowder was smuggled into a cellar running under the Parliament House; how, when Parliament was prorogued to November 5th, 1605, the conspirators, running short of money to equip an insurrection, added to their number a few wealthy accomplices,—most significant to our narrative, that old friend of the Vauxes, Sir Edward Digby, and Francis Tresham, cousin of Catesby and the Winters, and as I have said of the Vauxes themselves.[1] How Tresham, recoiling from the destruction of innocent Catholic Lords with the detested Protestants, met Catesby, Winter, and Fawkes at White Webbs, "a house known as Dr. Hewick's house by Enfield Chace," and laboured with them for permission to warn their friends, especially his brothers-in-law, Lord Stourton and Monteagle; and how, when permission was re-

[1] Fletcher's connections, also, the Bakers, Lennards, and Sackvilles were interested in the fortunes of Francis Tresham; for he had married Anne Tufton of Hothfield, Kent, granddaughter of Mary Baker who was sister of Sir Richard of Sissinghurst and of Cicely, first Countess of Dorset.—Collins, III, 489; Hasted, VII, 518. See below, Appendix, Tables D, E.

fused, he wrote an anonymous letter to Monteagle, begging him "as you tender your life, to devise some excuse to shift of your attendance at this Parliament; for God and man hath concurred to punish the wickedness of this time." How Monteagle informed the Council and the King. How Guy Fawkes was discovered among his barrels of gunpowder, and on the fourth of November arrested as "John Johnson," the servant of Thomas Percy, one of the King's Gentlemen Pensioners. How "on the morning of the fifth, the news of the great deliverance ran like wildfire along the streets of London," and Catesby and Wright, Percy and the brothers Winter, were in full flight for Lady Catesby's house in Ashby St. Legers, Northamptonshire, not far from Harrowden.

With the rest of the world Francis Beaumont would gasp with amazement. But what must have been his concern when on the first examination of "John Johnson," November 5th, the identity of that conspirator was established not by any confession of his, but from the contents of a letter found upon him, written by —— Beaumont's first cousin, Anne Vaux![1]

As intelligence oozed from the Lords of Council, Beaumont would next learn that Anne's sister-in-law, Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vaux of Harrowden had expected something was about to take place, and that Father Gerard and "Walley" [Garnet, the Father Superior of the English Jesuits] "made her house their chief resort"; and then that Fawkes had confessed that

[1] The facts as here presented are drawn from the *Calendar of State Papers* (*Domestic*), the *Gunpowder Plot Book*, and Father Gerard's *Narrative* (in Morris), in the order of dates as indicated.

Catesby, the two Winters, and Francis Tresham — all of the Vaux family connection — and Sir Everard Digby of their close acquaintance, were implicated in the Plot; and that the conspiracy was not merely to blow up the older members of the royal family but to secure the Princess Elizabeth, place her upon the throne, and marry her to an English Catholic,[1]— therefore, an enterprise likely to implicate his Catholic cousins, indeed. His friend, Ben Jonson, is meanwhile blustering of private informations, and Francis would be likely to hear that Ben has written (November 8) to Lord Salisbury offering his services to unravel the web "if no better person can be found," and averring that the Catholics "are all so enweaved in it as it will make 500 gent. lesse of the religion within this weeke." Then he is apprised that John Wright, Catesby, Percy, etc., have been seen at "Lady" Vaux's on the eighth. The next day, that these three and Christopher Wright have been overtaken and slain; and then that, on the ninth, Fawkes has confessed that they have been using a house of Father Garnet's at White Webbs as a rendezvous. Perhaps White Webbs means nothing to Francis just yet, but it soon will. Three days later, Tresham under examination acknowledges interviews with his cousins, Catesby and Thomas Winter, and with Fathers Garnet and Gerard; but says he has not been at Mrs. Vaux's house at Harrowden for a year. Soon afterwards, December 5, the Inner Temple itself is shaken to the foundations by the intelligence that Jesuit literature has been discovered by Sir Edward Coke in Tresham's chamber,— a manuscript

[1] Nov. 5–8.

of Blackwell's famous treatise on *Equivocation,* destined to play a baleful rôle in the ensuing examination of certain of the suspects.

Meanwhile, Francis would observe with alarm that his Vaux cousins are from day to day objects of deeper suspicion. On November 13, Lord Vaux's house at Harrowden is searched; his mother gives up all her keys but no papers are found. She and the young lord strongly deny all knowledge of the treason; the house, however, is still guarded. On the eighteenth, Elizabeth, Mrs. Vaux, is examined and says that she does not know "Gerard, the priest" [!]; but among the visitors at her house she mentions Catesby, Digby, and "Greene" [Greenway] and "Darcy" [Garnet], priests. She acknowledges having written to Lady Wenman, the wife of Sir Richard, last Easter, saying that "Tottenham would turn French," but fails to explain her meaning. From other quarters, however, it is learned that she bade that lady "be of good comfort for there should soon be toleration for religion," adding: "Fast and pray that that may come to pass which we purpose, which yf it doe, wee shall see Totnam turned French." And Sir Richard, examined concerning the contents of Mrs. Vaux's letter to his wife, affirms that he "disliked their intercourse, because Mrs. Vaux tried to pervert his wife." On December 4, Catesby's servant, Bates, acknowledges that he revealed the whole Plot to Greenway, the priest, in confession, "who said it was a good cause, bade him be secret, and absolved him." From Henry Huddleston's examination, December 6, it appears that Mrs. Vaux has not been telling the whole truth

about Harrowden, for not only were the two other priests most suspected, Garnet and Greenway, there sometimes, but also Gerard, whom Huddleston has met there. On January 19, Bates definitely connects Gerard and Garnet with the proceedings; and all three priests are proclaimed. Gerard cannot be found, but from his own *Narrative* it appears that he had been hiding at Harrowden before, that now he is concealed in London, and Elizabeth Vaux knows where.[1] When she is brought again before the Lords of Council and threatened with death if she tell not where the priest is, we may imagine the interest of the Beaumonts. Francis, though no sympathizer with the Plot, cannot have failed to admire the bearing of Elizabeth during the examination:

"As for my hostess, Mrs. Vaux," writes Father Gerard, "she was brought to London after that long search for me, and strictly examined about me by the Lords of the Council; but she answered to everything so discreetly as to escape all blame. At last they produced a letter of hers to a certain relative, asking for the release of Father Strange and another, of whom I spoke before. This relative of hers was the chief man in the county in which they had been taken, and she thought she could by her intercession with him prevail for their release. But the treacherous man, who had often enough, as far as words went, offered to serve her in any way, proved the truth of our Lord's prophecy, 'A man's enemies shall be those of his own household!' for he immediately sent up her letter to the Council. They showed her, therefore, her own

[1] Morris, *Life of Father Gerard*, p. 385.

letter, and said to her, 'You see now that you are entirely at the King's mercy for life or death; so if you consent to tell us where Father Gerard is, you shall have your life.'

"'I do not know where he is,' she answered, 'and if I did know, I would not tell you.'

"Then rose one of the lords, who had been a former friend of hers, to accompany her to the door, out of courtesy, and on the way said to her persuasively, 'Have pity on yourself and on your children, and say what is required of you, for otherwise you must certainly die.'

"To which she answered with a loud voice, 'Then, my lord, I will die.'

"This was said when the door had been opened, so that her servants who were waiting for her heard what she said, and all burst into weeping. But the Council only said this to terrify her, for they did not commit her to prison, but sent her to the house of a certain gentleman in the city, and after being held there in custody for a time she was released, but on condition of remaining in London. And one of the principal Lords of the Council acknowledged to a friend that he had nothing against her, except that she was a stout Papist, going ahead of others, and, as it were, a leader in evil."

What follows of Elizabeth's devotion to the cause, would not be likely to filter through; but the Beaumonts may have had their suspicions. According to Father Gerard:—

"Immediately she was released from custody, knowing that I was then in London, quite forgetful of her-

self, she set about taking care of me, and provided all the furniture and other things necessary for my new house. Moreover, she sent me letters daily, recounting everything that occurred; and when she knew that I wished to cross the sea for a time, she bid me not spare expense, so that I secured a safe passage, for that she would pay everything, though it should cost five thousand florins, and in fact she sent me at once a thousand florins for my journey. I left her in care of Father Percy, who had already as my companion lived a long time at her house. There he still remains, and does much good. I went straight to Rome, and being sent back thence to these parts, was fixed at Louvain." [1] So much at present of Elizabeth. We shall hear of her, as did Beaumont, during the succeeding years.

In the tribulations of Anne Vaux, his own first cousin, Francis must have been even more deeply interested. That she was in communication with Fawkes had been discovered, November 5. She was apprehended, committed to the care of Sir John Swynerton, but temporarily discharged. When Fawkes confessed, November 9, that the conspirators had been using a house of Father Garnet's at White Webbs, in Enfield Chace, the house called "Dr. Hewick's" was searched. "No papers nor munition found, but Popish books and relics,—and many trap-doors and secret passages." Garnet had escaped but, on examination of the servants, it developed that under the pseudonym of "Meaze" he had taken the house "for his sister, Mrs. Perkins,"—[and who should "Mrs. Perkins" turn out to be but

[1] Morris, pp. 413–414.

Anne Vaux!] The books and relics are the property of "Mrs. Jennings,"—[and who should she be but Anne's sister, Eleanor Brookesby!] "Mrs. Perkins spent a month at White Webbs lately;" and "three gentlemen [Catesby, Winter, and another] came to White Webbs, the day the King left Royston" [October 31]. On November 27, Sir Everard Digby's servant deposes concerning Garnet that "Mrs. Ann Vaux doth usually goe with him whithersoever he goethe." On January 19, as we have seen, warrants are out for the arrest of Garnet. On January 30, he is taken with another Jesuit priest, Father Oldcorne, at Hindlip Hall, in Worcestershire, where for seven days and nights they have been buried in a closet, and nourished by broths conveyed to them by means of a quill which passed "through a little hole in a chimney that backed another chimney into a gentlewoman's chamber." True enough, the deposition, that whithersoever her beloved Father Superior "goethe, Mrs. Ann Vaux doth usually goe"; for she is the gentlewoman of the broths and quill,— she with Mrs. Abington, the sister of Monteagle. Garnet and Oldcorne are taken prisoners to the Tower; and three weeks later Anne is in town again, communicating with Garnet by means of letters, ostensibly brief and patent, but eked out with tidings written in an invisible ink of orange-juice. On March 6, Garnet confesses that Mrs. Anne Vaux, alias Perkins, he, and Brookesby bear the expenses of White Webbs. On March 11, Anne being examined says that she keeps the place at her own expense; that Catesby, Winter, and Tresham have been to her house, but that she knew nothing of the Plot; on the contrary, suspect-

ing some mischief at one time, she had "begged Garnet to prevent it." Examined again on March 24, she says that "Francis Tresham, her cousin, often visited her and Garnet at White Webbs, Erith, Wandsworth, etc., when Garnet would counsel him to be patient and quiet; and that they also visited Tresham at his house in Warwickshire." Garnet's trial took place at Guildhall on March 28, Sir Edward Coke of the Inner Temple acting for the prosecution. Garnet acknowledged that the Plot had been conveyed to him by another priest [Greenway] in confession. He was convicted, however, not for failing to divulge that knowledge, but for failing to dissuade Catesby and the rest, both before and after he had gained knowledge from Greenway. He was executed on May 3. Of Anne's share in all that has preceded, Beaumont would by this date have known. One wonders whether he or his brother, John, ever learned the pathetic details of the final correspondence between Anne and the Father Superior. How, March 21, she wrote to him asking directions for the disposal of herself, and concluding that life without him was "not life but deathe." How, April 2, he replied with advice for her future; and as to Oldcorne and himself, added that the former had "dreamt there were two tabernacles prepared for them." How, the next day, she wrote again asking fuller directions and wishing Father Oldcorne had "dreamt there was a third seat" for her. And how, that same day, with loving thought for all details of her proceedings, and with sorrow for his own weakness under examination, the Father Superior sends his last word to her,— that

he will "die not as a victorious martyr, but as a penitent thief,"— and bids her farewell.

All this of the Harrowden cousins and their connection with Catholicism and the Gunpowder Plot, I have included not only because it touches nearly upon the family interests and friendships of Beaumont's early years, but also because it throws light upon the circumstances and feelings which prompted the satire of his first play, *The Woman-Hater* (acted in 1607), where as we shall see he alludes with horror to the Plot itself, but holds up to ridicule the informers who swarmed the streets of London in the years succeeding, and trumped up charges of conspiracy and recusancy against unoffending persons, and so sought to deprive them, if not of life, of property. It is with some hesitancy, since the proof to me is not conclusive, that I suggest that the animus in this play against favourites and intelligencers has perhaps more of a personal flavour than has hitherto been suspected. An entry from the Docquet, calendared with the State Papers, Domestic, of November 14, 1607, may indicate that John Beaumont, the brother of Francis, though a Protestant, had in some way manifested sympathy with his Catholic relatives during the persecutions which followed the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot:—"Gift to Sir Jas. Sempill of the King's two parts of the site of the late dissolved monastery of Grace-Dieu, and other lands in Leicester, in the hands of the Crown by the recusancy of John Beaumont." At first reading the John Beaumont would appear to be Francis' grandfather, the Master of the Rolls. But the Master lost his lands not

for recusancy (or refusal on religious grounds to take the Oath of Allegiance, or attend the State Church), but for malfeasance in office, and that in 1552-3, while the Protestant Edward VI was King. He had no lands to lose after Mary mounted the throne,— even if as a Protestant he were recusant under a Catholic Queen. The recusancy seems to be of a date contemporaneous with James's refusal, October 17, 1606, to take fines from recusants, the King, as the State Papers inform us, taking "two-thirds of their goods, lands, etc., instead." The "two-thirds" would appear to be the "two parts" of Grace-Dieu and other lands, specified in the Gift; and that the sufferer was Francis Beaumont's brother is rendered the more likely by the fact that the beneficiary, Sir James Sempill, had been distinguishing himself by hatred of Roman Catholics from November 16, 1605, on; and that on July 31, 1609, he is again receiving grants "out of lands and goods of recusants, to be convicted at his charges."

There is nothing, indeed, in the career of Beaumont's brother, John, as commonly recorded, or in the temper of his poetry to indicate a refusal on his part to disavow the supremacy of Rome in ecclesiastical affairs, or to attend regularly the services of the Protestant Church. His writings speak both loyalty and Protestant Christianity. But it is to be noted that not only many of his kinsmen but his wife, as well, belonged to families affiliated with Roman Catholicism, and that his eulogistic poems addressed to James are all of later years,— after his kinsman, Buckingham, had "drawn him from his silent cell," and "first inclined the anointed head to hear his rural songs, and read his

lines"; also that it is only under James's successor that he is honoured by a baronetcy. It is, therefore, not at all impossible that, because of some careless or over-frank utterance of fellow-feeling for his Catholic connections, or of repugnance for the unusually savage measures adopted after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, he may have been accused of recusancy, deprived of part of his estate, and driven into the seclusion which he maintained at Grace-Dieu till 1616 or thereabout.

CHAPTER V

FLETCHER'S FAMILY, AND HIS YOUTH

THE friendship between Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher may have commenced at any time after Francis became a member of the Inner Temple, in 1600,— probably not later than 1605, when Beaumont was about twenty-one and Fletcher twenty-six. The latter was the son of "a comely and courtly prelate," Richard, Bishop, successively of Bristol, Worcester, and London. Richard's father, also, had been a clerygyman; and Richard, himself, in his earlier years had been pensioner and scholar of Trinity, Cambridge (1563), then Fellow of Bene't College (Corpus Christi), then President of the College. In 1573 he married Elizabeth Holland at Cranbrook in Kent, perhaps of the family of Hugh Holland, descended from the Earls of Kent, who later appears in the circle of Beaumont's acquaintance; became, next, minister of the church of Rye, Sussex, about fifteen miles south of Cranbrook; then, Chaplain to the Queen; then, Dean of Peterborough. While he was officiating at Rye, in December 1579, John the fourth of nine children, was born. This John, the dramatist, is probably the "John Fletcher of London," who was admitted pensioner of Bene't College, Cambridge, in 1591, and, as if destined

for holy orders, became two years later a Bible-clerk, reading the lessons in the services of the college chapel. At the time of his entering college, his father had risen to the bishopric of Bristol; and, later in 1591, had been made Lord High Almoner to the Queen; he had a house at Chelsea, and was near the court "where his presence was accustomed much to be." By 1593 the Bishop had been advanced to the diocese of Worcester; and we find him active in the House of Lords with the Archbishop of Canterbury in the proposal of severe measures against the Barrowists and Brownists.[1] The next year he was elected Bishop of London,— succeeding John Aylmer, who had been tutor to Lady Jane Grey,— and was confirmed by royal assent in January 1595. From Sir John Harington's unfavourable account[2] it would appear that the Bishop owed his rapid promotion to the combination of great mind and small means which made him a fitting tool for "zealous courtiers whose devotion did serve them more to prey on the Church than pray in the Church." But his will, drawn in 1593, shows him mindful of the poor, solicitous concerning the "Chrystian and godlie education" of his children and confident in the principles and promises of the Christian faith,—"this hope hath the God of all comforte laide upp in my breste."

We have no record of John's proceeding to a degree. It is not unlikely that he left Cambridge for the city when his father attained the metropolitan see. From early years the boy had enjoyed every opportunity of

[1] *Cal. State Papers (Dom.)*, April 7, 1593.
[2] *Briefe View of the State of the Church.*

observing the ways of monarchs and courtiers, scholars and poets, as well as of princes of the Church. Since 1576, his father had "lived in her highnes," the Queen's, "gratious aspect and favour." *Præsul splendidus,* says Camden. Eloquent, accomplished, courtly, lavish in hospitality and munificence, no wonder that he counted among his friends, Burghley, the Lord Treasurer, and Burghley's oldest son, Sir Thomas Cecil, Anthony Bacon, the brother of Sir Francis, and that princely second Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, who had married the widow of Sir Philip Sidney, and with whom the lame but clever Anthony Bacon lived. Sir Francis Drake also was one of his friends and gave him a "ringe of golde" which he willed to one of his executors. Another of his "loveinge freindes," and an assistant-executor of his will, was the learned and vigorous Dr. Richard Bancroft, his successor as Bishop of London and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. As for immediate literary connections, suffice it here to say that the Bishop's brother, Dr. Giles Fletcher, was a cultivated diplomat and writer upon government, and that the sons of Dr. Giles were the clerical Spenserians, Phineas, but three years younger than his cousin the dramatist,— whose fisher-play *Sicelides* was acting at King's College, Cambridge, in the year of John's *Chances* in London, and whose *Brittain's Ida* is as light in its youthful eroticism as his *Purple Island* is ponderous in pedantic allegory,— and Giles, nine years younger than John, who was printing verses before John wrote his earliest play, and whose poem of *Christ's Victorie* was published, in 1610, a year or

so later than John's pastoral of *The Faithfull Shepheardesse.* Bishop Fletcher could tell his sons stories of royalty, not only in affluence, but in distress; for when John was but eight years old the father as Dean of Peterborough was chaplain to Mary, Queen of Scots, at Fotheringay, adding to her distress "by the zeal with which he urged her to renounce the faith of Rome." It was he who when Mary's head was held up after the execution cried, "So perish all the Queen's enemies!" [1] He could, also, tell them much about the great founder of the Dorset family, for at Fotheringay at the same time was Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, afterwards first Earl of Dorset, who had come to announce to Mary, Queen of Scots, the sentence of death.

From 1591 on, the Bishop was experiencing the alternate "smiles and frowns of royalty" in London; about the time that John left college more particularly the frowns. For, John's mother having died about the end of 1592, the Bishop had, in 1595, most unwisely married Maria (daughter of John Giffard of Weston-under-Edge in Gloucestershire), the relict of a few months' standing of Sir Richard Baker of Sissinghurst in Kent. The Bishop's acquaintance with this second wife, as well as with the first, probably derived from his father's incumbency as Vicar of the church in Cranbrook, Kent, which began in 1555 and was still existing as late as 1574. The young Richard would often have shuddered as a child before Bloody Baker's Prison with its iron-barred windows glowering from the parish church, for Sir John hated the

[1] Nichols's *Progresses of Queen Elizabeth,* II, 506-510.

primitive and pious Anabaptists who had taken up their abode about Cranbrook, and he hunted them down;[1] and Richard would, as a lad, have walked the two miles across the clayey fields and through the low-lying woods with his father to the stately manor house, built by old Sir John Baker himself in the time of Edward VI, and have seen that distinguished personage who had been Attorney-General and Chancellor of the Exchequer under Henry VIII,— and who as may be recalled was one of that Council of State, in 1553, which ratified and signed Edward VI's 'devise for the succession' making Lady Jane Grey inheritress of the crown. And when young Richard returned from his presidency of Bene't College, in 1573, to Cranbrook to marry Elizabeth Holland, he would have renewed acquaintance with Sir Richard, who had succeeded the "bloody" Sir John as master of Sissinghurst, sixteen years before. He may for all we know have been present at the entertainment which that same year Sir Richard made for Queen Elizabeth. Maria Giffard was twenty-four years old, then. Whether she was yet Lady Baker we do not know — but it is probable; and we may be sure that on his various visits to Cranbrook, the rising dean and bishop had frequent opportunity to meet her at Sissinghurst before his own wife's death, or the death of Sir Richard in 1594. Since the sister of Sir Richard Baker, Cicely, was already the wife of Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, when, in 1586–7, Buckhurst and Richard Fletcher, Dean of Peterborough, were thrown together at Fotheringay, it is not unlikely that the closer

[1] See the story in *Camden Miscellany*, III (1854).



THOMAS SACKVILLE, FIRST EARL OF DORSET
From the portrait in the possession of Lord Sackville, at Knole Park

association between the Fletchers and Lady Buckhurst's sister-in-law of Sissinghurst grew out of this alliance of the Sackvilles with the Bakers.

Lady Baker was in 1595 in conspicuous disfavour with Queen Elizabeth, and with the people too; for, if she was virtuous, as her nephew records,[1] "the more happy she in herself, though unhappy that the world did not believe it."[2] Certain it is, that in a contemporary satire she is thrice-damned as of the most ancient of disreputable professions, and once dignified as "my Lady Letcher." Though of unsavoury reputation, she was of fine appearance, and socially very well connected. Her brother, Sir George Giffard, was in service at Court under Elizabeth; and in Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, she had a brother-in-law, who was kinsman to the Queen, herself. But not only did the Queen dislike her, she disliked the idea of any of her prelates, especially her comely Bishop of London, marrying a second time, without her express consent. For a year after this second marriage the Bishop was suspended from his office. "Here of the Bishop was sadly sensible," says Fuller, "and seeking to lose his sorrow in a mist of smoak, died of the immoderate taking thereof." Sir John Harington, however, tells us that he regained the royal favour;—"but, certain it is that (the Queen being pacified, and hee in great jollity with his faire Lady and her Carpets and Cushions in his bed-chamber) he died suddenly, taking Tobacco in his chaire, saying to his man that stood by him, whom he loved very well, 'Oh, boy, I die.'"

[1] Sir Richard Baker, in his *Chronicle of the Kings of England.*
[2] Fuller's *Worthies,* as cited by Dyce, I, x, xi.

That was in 1596. The Bishop left little but his library and his debts. The former went to two of his sons, Nathaniel and John. The latter swallowed up his house at Chelsea with his other properties. The Bishop's brother and chief executor of the will, Giles, the diplomat, is soon memorializing the Queen for "some commiseration towards the orphans of the late Bishopp of London." He emphasizes the diminution of the Bishop's worldy estate consequent upon his translation to the costly see of London, his extraordinary charges in the reparation of the four episcopal residences, his lavish expenditure in hospitality, his penitence for "the errour of his late marriage," and concludes:—"He hath left behinde him 8 poore children, whereof divers are very young. His dettes due to the Quenes Majestie and to other creditors are 1400*li* or thereaboutes, his whole state is but one house wherein the widow claimeth her thirds, his plate valewed at 400*li*, his other stuffe at 500*li*." Anthony Bacon, who sympathized with the purpose of this memorial, enlisted the coöperation of Bishop Fletcher's powerful friend and his own patron, the Earl of Essex, who "likewise represented to the Queen the case of the orphans . . . in so favourable a light that she was inclin'd to relieve them;" but whether she did so or not, we are unable to discover.[1]

What John Fletcher,—a lad of seventeen, when, in 1596, he was turned out of Fulham Palace and his father's private house in Chelsea, with its carpets and

[1] The materials as furnished by Dyce, *B. and F.*, I, xiv-xv, from Birch's *Mem. of Elizabeth*, and the Bacon Papers in the Lambeth Library are confirmed by *Cal. St. Papers* (*Dom.*), June 1596, July 9, 1597, *etc.*

cushions and the special "stayre and dore made of purpose . . . in a bay window" for the entrance of Queen Elizabeth when she might deign, or did deign, to visit her unruly prelate,— what the lad of seventeen did for a living before we find him, about 1606 or 1607, in the ranks of the dramatists, we have no means of knowing. Perhaps the remaining years of his boyhood were spent with his uncle, Giles, and his young cousins, the coming poets, or with the aunt whom his father called "sister Pownell." The stepmother of eighteen months' duration is not likely with her luxurious tastes and questionable character to have tarried long in charge of the eight "poore and fatherless children." She had children of her own by her previous marriage, in whom to seek consolation, Grisogone and Cicely Baker, then in their twenties, and devoted to her.[1] And with one or both we may surmise that she resumed her life in Kent, or with the heir of sleepy Sissinghurst, making the most of her carpets and cushions and such of her "thirds" as she could recover, until — for she was but forty-seven — she might find more congenial comfort in a third marriage. Her permanent consoler was a certain Sir Stephen Thornhurst of Forde in the Isle of Thanet; and he, thirteen years after the death of her second husband, buried her in state in Canterbury Cathedral, 1609.

In 1603 her sister-in-law, Cicely (Baker) Sackville, now Countess of Dorset and the Earl, her husband, that fine old dramatist of Beaumont's Inner Temple, and former acquaintance at Fotheringay of John

[1] As her monument in Canterbury would indicate. Hasted, *Hist. Kent*, XI, 397.

Fletcher's father, had taken possession of the manor of Knole, near Sevenoaks in Kent, where their descendants live to-day. Before 1609, Fletcher's stepsister Cicely, named after her aunt, the Countess, had become the Lady Cicely Blunt. Grisogone became the Lady Grisogone Lennard, having married, about 1596, a great friend of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and of his Countess (Sir Philip Sidney's sister), Sir Henry, the son of Sampson Lennard of Chevening and Knole. The Lennard estate lay but three and a half miles from that of their connections, the Dorsets, of Knole Park. If young Fletcher ever went down to see his stepmother at Sissinghurst, or his own mother's family in Cranbrook, he was but twenty-six miles by post-road from Chevening and still less from Aunt Cicely at Knole. Beaumont, himself, as we shall see, married the heiress of Sundridge Place a mile and a half south of Chevening, and but forty minutes across the fields from Knole. His sister Elizabeth, too, married a gentleman of one of the neighbouring parishes. The acquaintance of both our dramatists with Bakers and Sackvilles was enhanced by sympathies literary and dramatic. A still younger Sir Richard Baker, cousin to John Fletcher's stepsisters, and to the second and third Earls of Dorset, was an historian, a poet, and a student of the stage — on familiar terms with Tarleton, Burbadge, and Alleyn. And the literary traditions handed down from Thomas Sackville, the author of *Gorboduc* and *The Mirror for Magistrates* were not forgotten by his grandson, Richard, third Earl of Dorset, the contemporary of our dramatists,— for whom, if I am not mistaken, their portraits, now hang-

ing in the dining-room of the Baron Sackville at Knole, were painted.[1]

I have dwelt thus at length upon the conditions antecedent to, and investing, the youth of Beaumont and of Fletcher, because the documents already at hand, if read in the light of scientific biography and literature, set before us with remarkable clearness the social and poetic background of their career as dramatists. When this background of birth, breeding, and family connection is filled in with the deeper colours of their life in London, its manners, experience, and associations, one may more readily comprehend why Dryden says in comparing them with Shakespeare, "they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen [of contemporary fashion] much better; whose wild debaucheries and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet before them could paint as they have done."

[1] For the Bakers and their connections, see Hasted, *Hist. Kent*, III, 77; IV, 374, *et seq.*; VII, 100–101; for the Sackvilles.—Hasted, III, 73–82; for the Lennards,—Hasted, III, 108–116; the *Peerages* of Collins, Burke, etc., and the articles in *D. N. B.* See also, below, Appendix, Table E.

CHAPTER VI

SOME EARLY PLAYS OF BEAUMONT AND OF FLETCHER

BEAUMONT and Fletcher may have been friends by 1603 or 1604,— in all likelihood, as early as 1605 when, as we have seen, Drayton and other "southern Shepherds" were by way of visiting the Beaumonts at Grace-Dieu. In that year Jonson's *Volpone* was acted for the first time; and one may divine from the familiar and affectionate terms in which our two young dramatists address the author upon the publication of the play in 1607 that they had been acquainted not only with Jonson but with one another for the two years past. We have no satisfactory proof of their coöperation in play-writing before 1606 or 1607. According to Dryden,— whose statements of fact are occasionally to be taken with a grain of salt, but who, in this instance, though writing almost sixty years after the event, is basing his assertion upon first-hand authority,—"the first play that brought 'them' in esteem was their *Philaster*," but "before that they had written two or three very unsuccessfully." *Philaster*, as I shall presently show, was, in all probability, first acted between December 7, 1609 and July 12, 1610. Before 1609, however, each had written dramas independently, Beaumont *The Woman-Hater* and *The*

Knight of the Burning Pestle; Fletcher, *The Faithfull Shepheardesse,* and maybe one or two other plays. Our first evidence of their association in dramatic activity is the presence of Fletcher's hand, apparently as a reviser, in three scenes of *The Woman-Hater,* which was licensed for publication May 20, 1607, as "lately acted by the Children of Paul's." From contemporary evidence we know, as did Dryden, that two of these plays, *The Knight* and *Faithfull Shepheardesse* were ungraciously received; and Richard Brome, about fourteen years after Fletcher's death, suggests that perhaps *Monsieur Thomas* shared "the common fate."

The Woman-Hater was the earliest play of either of our dramatists to find its way into print. Drayton's lines, already referred to, about "sweet Palmeo" imply that Beaumont was already known as a poet, before April 1606. A passage in the Prologue of *The Woman-Hater* seems, as Professor Thorndike has shown, to refer to the narrow escape of Jonson, Chapman, and Marston from having their ears cropped for an offense given to the King by their *Eastward Hoe.* If it does, "he that made this play," undoubtedly Beaumont, made it after the publication of *Eastward Hoe* in 1605. The title-page of 1607 says that the play is given "as it hath been lately acted." The ridicule of intelligencers emulating some worthy men in this land "who have discovered things dangerously hanging over the State" has reference to the system of spying which assumed enormous proportions after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in November 1605. An allusion to

King James's weakness for handsome young men, "Why may not *I* be a favourite in the sudden?" may very well refer, as Fleay has maintained, to the restoration to favour of Robert Ker (or Carr) of Ferniehurst, afterwards Earl Somerset,— a page whom James had "brought with him from Scotland, and brought up of a child," [1] but had dismissed soon after his accession. It was at a tilting match, March 24, 1607, that the youth "had the good fortune to break his leg in the presence of the King," and "by his personal activity, strong animal spirits," and beauty, to attract his majesty anew, and on the spot. The beauty, Beaumont emphasizes as a requisite for royal favour. "Why may not *I* be a favourite on the sudden?" says the bloated, hungry courtier, "I see nothing against it." "Not so, sir," replies Valore; "I know you have not the *face* to be a favourite on the sudden." The fact that James did not make a knight bachelor of Carr till December of that year, would in no way invalidate a fling at the favour bestowed upon him in March. Indeed Beaumont's slur in *The Woman-Hater* upon "the legs . . . very strangely become the legs of a knight and a courtier" might have applied to Carr as early as 1603, for on July 25 of that year James had made him a Knight of the Bath,— in the same batch, by the way, with a certain Oliver Cromwell of Huntingdonshire.[2] Without

[1] The King's letter to Salisbury (undated, but of 1608). Gardiner, *Hist. Engl.* 1603-1642, II, 43-45.

[2] This much more distinguished favour has been overlooked by Thorndike and other critics. But it is possible that Shaw, *Knights of England*, I, 154, may be confounding him with another Carr, a favourite of Queen Anne's.

violating the plague regulations, as laid down by the City, *The Woman-Hater* could have been acted during the six months following November 20, 1606. A passage in Act III, 2,[1] which I shall presently quote in full, is, as has not previously been noticed, a manifest parody of one of Antony's speeches in *Antony and Cleopatra*[2] which, according to all evidence, was not acted before 1607. It would appear, therefore, that Beaumont's first play was completed after January 1, 1607, probably after March 24, when Carr regained the royal favour, and was presented for the first time during the two months following the latter date.

The Woman-Hater affords interesting glimpses of the author's observation, sometimes perhaps experience, in town and country. "That I might be turned loose," says one of his *dramatis personae*, "to try my fortune amongst the whole fry in a college or an inn of court!" And another, a gay young buck,—"I must take some of the common courses of our nobility, which is thus: If I can find no company that likes me, pluck off my hat-band, throw an old cloak over my face and, as if I would not be known, walk hastily through the streets till I be discovered: 'There goes Count Such-a-one,' says one; 'There goes Count Such-a-one,' says another; 'Look how fast he goes,' says a third; 'There 's some great matters in hand, questionless,' says a fourth; — when all my business is to have them say so. This hath been used. Or, if I can find any company [acting at the theatre], I 'll after dinner to the stage to see a play; where, when I first enter, you shall have a murmur in the house; every

[1] Dyce, *B. and F.*, Vol. I, p. 53. [2] Act IV, 14, 50–54.

one that does not know, cries, 'What nobleman is that?' All the gallants on the stage, rise, vail to me, kiss their hand, offer me their places; then I pick out some one whom I please to grace among the rest, take his seat, use it, throw my cloak over my face, and laugh at him; the poor gentleman imagines himself most highly graced, thinks all the auditors esteem him one of my bosom friends, and in right special regard with me." And again, and this is much like first-hand knowledge: "There is no poet acquainted with more shakings and quakings, towards the latter end of his new play (when he's in that case that he stands peeping betwixt the curtains, so fearfully that a bottle of ale cannot be opened but he thinks somebody hisses), than I am at this instant." And again, — of the political spies, who had persecuted more than one of Beaumont's relatives and, according to tradition, trumped up momentary trouble for our young dramatists themselves, a few years later: "This fellow is a kind of informer, one that lives in alehouses and taverns; and because he perceives some worthy men in this land, with much labour and great expense, to have discovered things dangerously hanging over the state, he thinks to discover as much out of the talk of drunkards in tap-houses. He brings me information, picked out of broken words in men's common talk, which with his malicious misapplication he hopes will seem dangerous; he doth, besides, bring me the names of all the young gentlemen in the city that use ordinaries or taverns, talking (to my thinking) only as the freedom of their youth teach them without any further ends, for dan-

gerous and seditious spirits." Much more in this kind, of city ways known to Beaumont; and, also, something of country ways, the table of the Leicestershire squire — the Beaumonts of Coleorton and the Villierses of Brooksby,— and the hunting-breakfasts with which Grace-Dieu was familiar. The hungry courtier of the play vows to "keep a sumptuous house; a board groaning under the heavy burden of the beast that cheweth the cud, and the fowl that cutteth the air. It shall not, like the table of a country-justice, be sprinkled over with all manner of cheap salads, sliced beef, giblets and pettitoes, to fill up room; nor shall there stand any great, cumbersome, uncut-up pies at the nether end, filled with moss and stones, partly to make a show with, partly to keep the lower mess [below the salt] from eating; nor shall my meal come in sneaking like the city-service, one dish a quarter of an hour after another, and gone as if they had appointed to meet there and mistook the hour; nor should it, like the new court-service, come in in haste, as if it fain would be gone again [whipped off by the waiters], all courses at once, like a hunting breakfast: but I would have my several courses and my dishes well filed [ordered]; my first course shall be brought in after the ancient manner by a score of old blear-eyed serving-men in long blue coats."— And not a little of life at Court, and of the favourites with whom King James surrounded himself:— "They say one shall see fine sights at the Court? I 'll tell you what you shall see. You shall see many faces of man's making, for you shall find very few as God left them: and you

shall see many legs too; amongst the rest you shall behold one pair, the feet of which were in past times sockless, but are now, through the change of time (that alters all things), very strangely become the legs of a knight and a courtier; another pair you shall see, that were heir-apparent legs to a glover; these legs hope shortly to be honourable; when they pass by they will bow, and the mouth to these legs will seem to offer you some courtship; it will swear, but it will lie; hear it not."

Keen observation this, and a dramatist's acquaintance with many kinds of life; the promise of a satiric mastery, and very vivid prose for a lad of twenty-three. The play is not, as a dramatic composition, of any peculiar distinction. Beaumont is still in his pupilage to the classics, and to Ben Jonson's comedy of humours. But the humours, though unoriginal and boyishly forced, are clearly defined; and the instinct for fun is irrepressible. The Woman-Hater, obsessed by the delusion that all women are in pursuit, is admirably victimized by a witty and versatile heroine who has, with maliciously genial pretense, assumed the rôle of man-hunter. And to the main plot is loosely, but not altogether ineffectually, attached a highly diverting story which Beaumont has taken from the Latin treatise of Paulus Jovius on Roman fishes, or from some intermediate source. Like the Tamisius of the original, his Lazarillo,— whose prayer to the Goddess of Plenty is ever, "fill me this day with some rare delicates,"— scours the city in fruitless quest of an umbrana's head. Finally, he is taken by intelligencers, spies in the service of the state, who construe his pas-

sion for the head of a fish as treason aimed at the head of the Duke. The comedy abounds in parody of verses well known at the time, of lines from *Hamlet* and *All's Well that End Well, Othello* [1] and *Eastward Hoe* [1] and bombastic catches from other plays. To me the most ludicrous bit of burlesque is of the moment of last suspense in *Antony and Cleopatra* (IV, 14 and 15) where Antony, thinking to die "after the high Roman fashion" which Cleopatra forthwith emulates, says "I come my queen,"—

> Stay for me!
> Where souls do couch on flowers, we 'll hand in hand,
> And with our sprightly port make the ghosts gaze.
> Dido and her Aeneas shall want troops,
> And all the haunt [of Elysium] be ours.

So Lazarillo, in awful apprehension lest his love, his fish-head, be eaten before he arrive,—

> If it be eaten, here he stands that is the most dejected, most unfortunate, miserable, accursed, forsaken slave this province yields! I will not sure outlive it; no, I will die bravely and like a Roman;
>
> And after death, amidst the Elysian shades,
> I 'll meet my love again.

Shakespeare's play was not entered for publication till May 20, 1608, but this passage shows that Beaumont had seen it at the Globe before May 20, 1607.

I have no hesitation in assigning to the same year, 1607, although most critics have dated it three or

[1] *Cf.*, Lazarillo's *Farewells*, Act III, 3.

four years later, Beaumont's admirable burlesque of contemporary bourgeois drama and chivalric romance, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle.* Evidence both external and internal, which I shall later state, points to its presentation by the Children of the Queen's Revels at Blackfriars while they were under the business management of Henry Evans and Robert Keysar, and before the temporary suppression of the company in March 1608. The question of date has been complicated by the supposed indebtedness of the burlesque to *Don Quixote;* but I shall attempt to show, when I consider the play at length, that it has no verbal relation either to the original (1604) or the translation (1612) of Cervantes' story. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is in some respects of the same boyish tone and outlook upon the humours of life as *The Woman-Hater,* but it is incomparably more novel in conception, more varied in composition, and more effervescent in satire. It displays the Beaumont of twenty-two or -three as already an effective dramatist of contemporary manners and humours, a master of parody, side-long mirth, and ironic wit, before he joined forces with Fletcher and developed, in the treatment of more serious and romantic themes, the power of poetic characterization and the pathos that bespeak experience and reflection,— and, in the treatment of the comedy of life, the realism that proceeds from broad and sympathetic observation. The play, which as the publisher of the first quarto, in 1613, tell us was "begot and borne in eight daies," was not a success; evidently because the public did not like the sport that it made of dramas and dramatists then popular; espe-

cially, did not stomach the ridicule of the bombast-loving and romanticizing London citizen himself,— was not yet educated up to the humour; perhaps, because "hee . . . this unfortunate child . . . was so unlike his brethren." At any rate, according to Walter Burre, the publisher, in 1613, "the wide world for want of judgement, or not understanding the privy marke of Ironie about it (which showed it was no offspring of any vulgar braine) utterly rejected it." And Burre goes on to say in his Dedication of the quarto to Maister Robert Keysar:—"for want of acceptance it was even ready to give up the Ghost, and was in danger to have bene smothered in perpetuall oblivion, if you (out of your direct antipathy to ingratitude) had not bene moved both to relieve and cherish it: wherein I must needs commend both your judgement, understanding, and singular love to good wits."

The rest of this Dedication is of great interest as bearing upon the date of the composition of the play; but it has been entirely misconstrued or else it gives us false information. That matter I shall discuss in connection with the sources and composition of the play.[1] Suffice it to say here that *The Knight* followed *The Travails of Three English Brothers,* acted June 29, 1607, and that the Robert Keysar who rescued the manuscript of *The Knight* from oblivion had, only in 1606 or 1607, acquired a financial interest in the Queen's Revels' Children, and was backing them during the last year of their occupancy of Blackfriars when they presented the play, and where only it was presented.

[1] See Chap. XXIV, below.

In the same year, 1607, both young men are writing commendatory verses for the first quarto of Ben Jonson's *Volpone,* which had been acted in 1605. Beaumont, with the confidence of intimacy, addresses Jonson as "Dear Friend," praises his "even work," deplores its failure with the many who "nothing can digest, but what 's obscene, or barks," and implies that he forbears to make them understand its merits purely in deference to Jonson's wiser judgment,—

> I would have shewn
> To all the world the art which thou alone
> Hast taught our tongue, the rules of time, of place
> And other rites, deliver'd with the grace
> Of comic style, which only is far more
> Than any English stage hath known before.
> But since our subtle gallants think it good
> To like of nought that may be understood . . .
> let us desire
> They may continue, simply to admire
> Fine clothes and strange words,

and offensive personalities.

Fletcher in a more epigrammatic appeal to "The true master in his art, B. Jonson," prays him to forgive friends and foes alike, and then, those "who are nor worthy to be friends or foes."

Concerning Fletcher's beginnings in composition the earliest date is suggested by a line of D'Avenant's, written many years after Fletcher's death (1625), "full twenty years he wore the bays." [1] It has been

[1] Prologue, for a revival, in 1649, of *The Woman-Hater,* which D'Avenant mistakenly attributes to Fletcher.

conjectured by some that the elder of our dramatists was in the field as early as 1604, with his comedy of *The Woman's Prize* or *The Tamer Tamed,*—a well contrived and witty continuation of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew,*— in which Maria, a cousin of Shakespeare's Katherine, now deceased, marries the bereaved Petruchio and effectively turns the tables upon him. If acted before 1607, *The Woman's Prize* was a Paul's Boys' or Queen's Revels' play. But while the upper limit of the play is fixed by the mention of the siege of Ostend, 1604, other references and the literary style point to 1610, even to 1614, as the date of composition or revision.[1]

It is likely that Fletcher was writing plays before 1608, but what we do not know. In that year was acted the pastoral drama of *The Faithfull Shepheardesse,* a composition entirely his own. This delicate confection of sensual desire, ideal love, translunar chastity, and subacid cynicism regarding "all ideas of chastity whatever,"[2] was an experiment; and a failure upon the stage. It has, as I shall later emphasize, lyric and descriptive charm of surpassing merit, but it lacks, as does most of Fletcher's work, moral depth and emotional reality; and following, as it did, a literary convention in design, it could not avail itself of the skill in dramatic device, and the racy flavour which

[1] Reasons for dating an earlier version of the play about 1604 are given by Oliphant, *Engl. Studien,* XV, 338–339, and Thorndike, *Infl. of B. and F.,* 70-71. In its present form, however, the play dates later than Jonson's *Epicoene,* 1610. See Gayley, *Rep. Eng. Com.,* III, *Introd.,* § 15.

[2] I heartily concur with W. W. Greg's interpretation, *Pastoral Poetry and Pastoral Drama,* p. 274.

a little later characterized his *Monsieur Thomas*. The date of its first performance is determined by the combined authority of the Stationers' Registers (from which we learn that the publishers of the first quarto, undated, but undoubtedly of 1609,[1] were in unassisted partnership only from December 22, 1608 to July 20, 1609), of a statement of Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden that the play was written "ten years" before 1618, and of commendatory verses to the first quarto of 1609, by the young actor-dramatist, Nathaniel Field. If we may guide our calculations by the plague regulations of the time, it must have been acted before July 28, 1608.

On the appearance of the first quarto, in 1609, Jonson sympathizing with "the worthy author," on the ill reception of the pastoral when first performed, says:

> I, that am glad thy innocence was their guilt,

for the rabble found not there the "vices, which they look'd for," I —

> Do crown thy murder'd poem; which shall rise
> A glorified work to time, when fire
> Or moths shall eat what all these fools admire.

And Francis Beaumont writing to "my friend, Master John Fletcher" speaks of his "undoubted wit" and "art," and rejoices that, if they should condemn the play now that it is printed,

> Your censurers must have the quality
> Of reading, which I am afraid is more
> Than half your shrewdest judges had before.

[1] See Fleay, *Chron. Eng. Dr.*, I, 312, and Thorndike, *Infl. of B. and F.*, 64.

In the first quarto two commendatory poems are printed, the first by N. F., the second by the Homeric scholar and well known dramatist, George Chapman. The latter writes "to his loving friend, Master John Fletcher," in terms of generous encouragement and glowing charm. Your pastoral, says he, is "a poem and a play, too,"—

But because
Your poem only hath by us applause,
Renews the golden world, and holds through all
The holy laws of homely pastoral,
Where flowers and founts, and nymphs and semi-gods,
And all the Graces find their old abodes,
Where forests flourish but in endless verse,
And meadows nothing fit for purchasers;
This iron age, that eats itself, will never
Bite at your golden world; that other's ever
Lov'd as itself. Then like your book, do you
Live in old peace, and that for praise allow.

If Jonson, Chapman, and Beaumont suspected the undercurrent of satire in this Pastoral, and they surely were not obtuse, they concealed the suspicion admirably. As for Fletcher he continued to "live in old peace." "When his faire Shepheardesse on the guilty stage, Was martir'd between Ignorance and Rage. . . . Hee only as if unconcernèd smil'd." An attitude toward the public that characterized him all through life.

The admiration of younger men is shown in the respectful commendation of N. F. This is Nathaniel Field. He was acting with the Blackfriars' Boys since the days when Jonson presented *Cynthia's Revels,*

The Faithfull Shepheardesse that may with any degree of safety be admitted to consideration is a comedy of romance, manners, and humours, *Monsieur Thomas.* The romance is a delightful story of self-abnegating love. The father, Valentine, and the son Francisco, supposed to have been drowned long ago, and now known (if the texts had only printed the play as Fletcher wrote it) as Callidon, a guest of Valentine, love the same girl, the father's ward. This part of the play is executed with captivating grace. It shows that Fletcher had, from the first, an instinct for the dramatic handling of a complicated story, an eye for delicate and surprising situations, an appreciation of chivalric honour and genuine passion, and a fancy fertile and playful. In the subplot the manners are such as would appeal to a Fletcher not yet thirty years of age; and the humours are those of a student of the earlier plays of Ben Jonson, and of Marston — who ceased writing in 1607. It has indeed been asserted, but without much credibility, that "the notion of the panerotic Hylas," who must always "be courting wenches through key-holes," was taken from a character in Marston's *Parasitaster,* of 1606.[1] The name of this Captain, Hylas, was in the mouth of Fletcher in those early days; he uses it again in his part of the *Philaster,* written in 1609 or 1610, and elsewhere. The snatches of song and the names of ballads are those of contemporary popularity between 1606 and 1609; and in two instances they are those of which Beaumont makes use in his *Knight of the Burning Pestle* of 1607. The play was acted, too, appar-

[1] See Guskar, *Anglia,* XXVIII, XXIX.

ently by the same company, the Queen's Revels' Children, and in the same house as was Beaumont's. It could not have been played by them at "the Private House in Black Fryers" later than March 1608, unless they squeezed it into that last month of 1609 which serves as a telescope basket for so many of the plays which critics cannot satisfactorily date.

For my present purpose, which is to show how Fletcher, not assisted by Beaumont, wrote during his youth, it makes little difference whether *Monsieur Thomas* was written as early as 1608 or only before 1611. The fact is, however, that a line in the last scene, "Take her, Francisco, now no more young Callidon," shows clearly that Callidon, a name not occurring elsewhere in the play, and necessary to the dramatic complication, had been used by Fletcher in his first version; and when we put the names Callidon and Cellidée together (she is Francisco's belovèd) we are pointed at once to the source of the romantic plot — the *Histoire de Celidée, Thamyre, et Calidon* at the beginning of the Second Part of the *Astrée* of the Marquis D'Urfé.[1] The First Part of this voluminous pastoral romance had been published, probably in 1609, in an edition which is lost; but a second edition, dedicated to Henri IV, who died May 14, 1610, appeared that year. Some of Fletcher's inspiration, as for the name and general characteristic of Hylas, was drawn from the First Part. The Second Part was not printed till later in

[1] Stiefel, *Zeitschr. f. Vergl. Litt.*, XII (1898), 248; *Engl. Stud.*, XXXVI; Hatcher, *Anglia*, Feb. 1907; and Macaulay, *C.H.L.*, VI, 156.

1610. It would, therefore, appear that Fletcher could not have written *Monsieur Thomas* before the latter date. On the other hand, as Dr. Upham [1] has indicated, the *Astrée* had been read as early as February 12, 1607, by Ben Jonson's friend, William Drummond, who, on that day, writes about it critically to Sir George Keith. If the First Part had been circulated in manuscript, and read by an Englishman, in 1607, it is not at all unlikely that the Second Part, too, of this most leisurely published romance, which did not get itself all into covers till 1647, had been read in manuscript by many men, French and English, long before its appearance in print, 1610; — may be by Fletcher himself, as early as 1608. Or he may have heard the story, as early as that, from some one who had read it. The fact that he alters some of the names, follows the plot but loosely, characterizes the personages not at all as if he had the original before him, and uses none of their diction, would favour the supposition that he is writing from hearsay, or from some second hand and condensed version of the story.

No matter what the exact date of composition, *Monsieur Thomas* is the one play beside *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* from which we may draw conclusions concerning the native tendencies of the young Fletcher. The subplot of Thomas, concocted with clever ease, and furnished with varied devices appropriate to comic effect — disguisings, mouse-traps, dupers duped, street-frolics and mock sentimental serenades, scaling-ladders, convents, and a blackamoor girl for a decoy-

[1] *French Influence in English Literature*, pp. 300, 308.

duck,— is conceived in a rollicking spirit and executed in sprightly conversational style. Sir Adolphus Ward says that "as a picture of manners it is excelled by few other Elizabethan comedies." I am sorry that I cannot agree; I call it low, or farcical comedy; and though the 'manners' be briskly and realistically imagined, I question their contemporary actuality,— even their dramatic probability. Amusing scapegraces like the hero of the title-part have existed in all periods of history; and fathers, who will not have their sons mollycoddles; and squires of dames, like the susceptible Hylas. But manners, to be dramatically probable, must reflect the contacts of possible characters in a definite period. And no one can maintain that the contact of these persons with the women of the play is characterized by possibility. Or that these manners could, even in the beginning of James I's reign, have characterized a perceptible percentage of actual Londoners. Thomas, whose humour it is to assume sanctimony for the purpose of vexing his father, and blasphemy for the purpose of teasing his sweetheart — racking that "maiden's tender ears with damns and devils,"— is no more grotesque than many a contemporary embodiment of 'humour.' But what of his contacts with the "charming" Mary who "daily hopes his fair conversion" and has "a credit," and "loves where her modesty may live untainted"; and, then, that she may "laugh an hour" admits him to her bedchamber, having substituted for herself a negro wench? And what of the contacts with his equally "modest" sister, Dorothy, who not only talks smut with him and with the "charming" Mary, but deems his fornication

"fine sport" and would act it if she were a man? I fear that much reading of decadent drama sometimes impairs the critical perception. In making allowance for what masquerades as historical probability one frequently accepts human improbabilities, and condones what should be condemned — even from the dramatic point of view. I have found it so in my own case. With all its picaresque quality, its jovial 'humours' and its racy fun, this play is sheer stage-rubbish: it has no basis in the general life of the class it purports to represent, no basis in actual manners, nor in likelihood or poetry. Its basis is in the uncritical and, to say the least, irresponsible taste of a theatre-going Rump which enjoyed the spurious localization, and attribution to others, of the imaginings of its own heart.

The characters are well grouped; and the spirit of merriment prevails. The reversals of motive and fortune, the recognitions and the dénouement are as excellently and puerilely absurd as could be desired of such an amalgam of romance and farcical intrigue. Richard Brome, writing in praise of the author for the quarto of 1639, implies that the play was not well received at its "first presenting,"—"when Ignorance was judge, and but a few What was legitimate, what bastard knew." That first presenting was between 1608 and 1612; and the few might have cared more for Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* or *Volpone,* or something by Shakespeare, or soon afterwards for Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* or *A King and No King.* But, as Brome assures us, "the world 's grown wiser now." That is to say, it had learned by

1639 "what was legitimate," and could believe that in Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* and the like, "the Muses jointly did inspire His raptures only with their sacred fire." But even as transmogrified by D'Urfey and others the play did not survive its century.

No better example could be afforded of the kind of comedy that Fletcher was capable of producing in his earlier period. It shows us with what ability he could dramatize a romantic tale; with what license as a realist imagine and portray an unmoral, when not immoral, semblance of contemporary life. That was either before Beaumont had joined forces with him; or when Beaumont was not pruning his fancy; was not hanging "plummets" on his wit "to suppress Its too luxuriant-growing mightiness," nor persuading him that mirth might subsist "untainted with obscenity," and "strength and sweetness" and "high choice of brain" be "couched in every line." I am not claiming too much for Beaumont. In his later work as in his earlier there is the frank animalism, at times, of Elizabethan blood and humour; but one may search in vain his parts of the joint-plays as well as his youthful *Knight of the Burning Pestle* and those portions of *The Woman-Hater* which Fletcher did not touch, for the Jacobean salaciousness of Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* and the carnal cynicism which lurks beneath the pastoral garb of innocence even in *The Faithfull Shepheardesse;* — characteristics that find utterance again, untrammeled, in the dramas written after the younger poet was dead,— and Fletcher could no longer, as in those earlier days,

wisely submit each birth
To knowing Beaumont e're it did come forth,
Working againe untill *he* said 'twas fit;
And make him the sobriety of his wit.[1]

During the years of Beaumont's apprenticeship to Poetry cloaked as Law things had changed but little in his world of the Inner Temple. In its parliament, Sir Edward Coke, judicial, intrepid, and devout is still most potent. The chamber, lodging, and rooms which his father, Mr. Justice Beaumont, and his uncle Henry had built and occupied near to Ram Alley in the north end of Fuller's Rents are still held by Richard Daveys, who as Treasurer moved into them in 1601. Dr. Richard Masters is still Master of the Temple; and in the church, where Francis was obliged to receive the Sacrament at stated times, he, sitting perhaps by his uncle Henry's tomb, would hear the assistant ministers, Richard Evans and William Crashaw. The sacred place was still the refuge of outlaws from Whitefriars who claimed the privilege of sanctuary. If Beaumont wished to steal, after hours, into the Alsatia beyond Fuller's Rents, he must skirt or propitiate in 1607 as in 1602 the same Cerberus at the gates,— William Knight, the glover. Outside awaited him the hospitality of the Mitre Inn, or of Barrow at the "Cat and Fiddle," or of the slovenly Anthony Gibbes in his cook's shop of Ram Alley.[2]

[1] Adapted from Cartwright in the *Commendatory Poems*, Folio of *B. and F.*, 1647.

[2] Details in Inderwick, *op. cit.*, Vols. I and II, passim.

CHAPTER VII

THE "BANKE-SIDE" AND THE PERIOD OF THE PARTNERSHIP

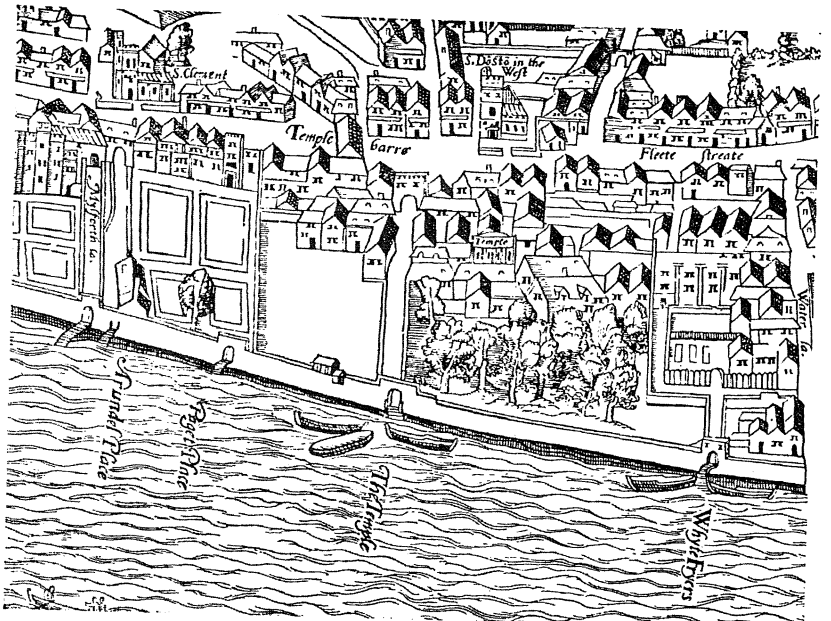
AS we shall presently see, Beaumont during his career in London retained his connection with the Inner Temple, which would be his club; and it may be presumed that up to 1606 or 1607, his residence alternated between the Temple and his brother's home of Grace-Dieu. About 1609, however, he was surely collaborating with his friend, Fletcher, in the composition of plays. And we may conjecture that, in that or the previous year, our Castor and Pollux were established in those historic lodgings in Southwark where, as Aubrey, writing more than half a century later, tells us, they lived in closest intimacy. That gossipy chronicler records the obvious in his "there was a wonderfull consimility of phansey between him [Beaumont] and Mr. Jo. Fletcher, which caused that dearnesse of friendship between them";[1] but when he proceeds "They lived together on the Banke-side, not far from the Play-house, both batchelors; lay together (from Sir James Hales, etc.); had one wench in the house between them, which they did so admire, the same cloaths and cloake, etc., between them," we feel that so far as inferences are concerned the ac-

[1] Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, Ed. Clark, I, 94-95.

count is to be taken with at least a morsel of reserve. Aubrey was not born till after both Beaumont and Fletcher were dead; and, as Dyce pertinently remarks, "perhaps Aubrey's informant (Sir James Hales) knowing his ready credulity, purposely overcharged the picture of our poets' domestic establishment." To inquire too closely into gossip were folly; but it is only fair to recall that sixty years after Fletcher's death, popular tradition was content with conferring the "wench," exclusively upon him. Oldwit, in Shadwell's play of *Bury-Fair* (1689) says: "I myself, simple as I stand here, was a wit in the last age. I was created Ben Jonson's son, in the Apollo. I knew Fletcher, my friend Fletcher, and his maid Joan; well, I shall never forget him: I have supped with him at his house on the Banke-side; he loved a fat loin of pork of all things in the world; and Joan his maid had her beer-glass of sack; and we all kissed her, i' faith, and were as merry as passed." [1] It is hardly necessary, in any case, to surmise with those who sniff up improprieties that the admirable services of the original "wench," whether Joan or another, far exceeded the roasting of pork and the burning of sack for her two "batchelors."

To the years 1609 and 1610 may be assigned with some show of confidence Beaumont and Fletcher's first significant romantic dramas *The Coxcombe* and *Philaster*. The former was acted by the Children of her Majesty's Revels, I think before July 12, 1610. If at Blackfriars, before January 4, 1610; if at Whitefriars, after January 4. There are grounds for

[1] Dyce, *B. and F.*, I, XXVI, *n.*



THE TEMPLE

From Ralph Agas's Map of London, about 1561

believing that it was the play upon which Fletcher and Beaumont were engaged in the country when Beaumont wrote a letter, justly famous, probably toward the end of 1609, to Ben Jonson; and, since the play was not well received, that it was one of the unsuccessful comedies which as Dryden says preceded *Philaster*. *Philaster* was acted at the Globe and Blackfriars by the King's Men, for the first time, it would appear, between December 7, 1609 and July 12, 1610. My reasons in detail for thus dating both of these dramas are given later. But a word about the *Letter to Ben Jonson* may be said here.

It was first printed at the end of a play called *The Nice Valour* in the folio of 1647. Owing to a careless acceptance of the rubric prefixed to it by the publishers of that folio, historians have ordinarily dated its composition at too early a period. The poem itself mentions "Sutcliffe's wit," referring to three controversial tracts of the Dean of Exeter, printed in 1606; but Beaumont might jibe at the Dean's expense for years after 1606. The rubic inscribed a generation after the death of both our dramatists, and therefore of but secondary importance, tells us that the *Letter* was "written, before he [Beaumont] and Master Fletcher came to London, with two of the precedent comedies, then not finish'd, which deferr'd their merry meetings at the Mermaid." We know that the young men had been in London for years before 1606. If the rubric has any meaning whatever, it is merely that the customary convivialities at the Mermaid, as described in the *Letter,* had been interrupted by a visit to the country during which

they were finishing two of the comedies which precede *The Nice Valour* in the folio; and it indicates a date not earlier than 1608, for the writing of the letter, and probably not later than July 1610. For only three of the fifteen plays which appear in the folio before *The Nice Valour* could have been completed during the career of Beaumont as a dramatist, and none of the three antedates 1608. In two of these Beaumont had no hand: *The Captain,* which may have been composed as late as 1611, and *Beggars' Bush,*[1] which shows the collaboration of Massinger, but Fletcher's part of which may have been written in 1608. The only one of the "precedent comedies" in which we may be sure that Beaumont collaborated is *The Coxcombe.* If, as I believe, it was acted first between December 1609 and July 1610[2] it may well have been written in the country during the latter half of 1609, while the plague rate was exceptionally high in London. Both *Beggars' Bush* and *The Coxcombe* abound in rural scenes; but the latter especially, in scenes that might have been suggested by Grace-Dieu and its neighborhood.

The rubric prefixed to the *Letter* by the publishers is of negligible authority. The 'me' and 'us' of the *Letter* itself do not necessarily designate Fletcher as the companion of Beaumont's rustication: they stand at one time for country-folk; at another for the Mermaid circle, Jonson, Chapman, Fletcher, probably Shakespeare, Drayton, Cotton, Donne, Hugh Holland,

[1] Based upon Dekker's *Bellman of London,* 1608. Acted at Court, 1622.

[2] See Chapter XXV, below.

Tom Coryate, Richard Martin, Selden (of Beaumont's Inner Temple), and other famous wits and poets; at another for Jonson and Beaumont alone. The date of the poem must be determined from internal evidence. It is written with the careless ease of long-standing intimacy. It is of a genial, jocose, and fairly mature, epistolary style. It betrays the literary assurance of one whose reputation is already established. Beaumont is in temporary banishment from London, for lack of funds — therefore, considerably later than 1606, when he was presumably well off; for in that year he had just come into a quarter of his brother, Sir Henry's, private estate. He longs now for the stimulus of the merry meetings in Bread-street, as one whose wit has been sharpened by them for a long time past:

> Methinks the little wit I had is lost
> Since I saw you; for Wit is like a Rest
> Held up at Tennis, which men do the best
> With the best gamesters; . . .

up here in Leicestershire "The Countrey Gentlemen begin to allow My wit for dry bobs." "In this warm shine" of our hay-making season, soberly deferring to country knights, listening to hoary family-jests, drinking water mixed with claret-lees, "I lye and dream of your full Mermaid Wine":

> What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
> So nimble, and so full of subtill flame,
> As if that every one from whence they came

Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolv'd to live a foole, the rest
Of his dull life. Then, when there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justifie the Town
For three daies past,— wit that might warrant be
For the whole City to talk foolishly
Till that were cancell'd,—and, when that was gone,
We left an Aire behind us, which alone
Was able to make the two next Companies
Right witty; though but downright fooles, more wise.

When he remembers all this, he "needs must cry," but one thought of Ben Jonson cheers him:

Only strong Destiny, which all controuls,
I hope hath left a better fate in store
For me thy friend, than to live ever poore,
Banisht unto this home. Fate once againe
Bring me to thee, who canst make smooth and plaine
The way of Knowledge for me, and then I,
Who have no good but in thy company
Protest it will my greatest comfort be
To acknowledge all I have to flow from thee.
Ben, when these Scaenes are perfect, we 'll taste wine;
I 'll drink thy Muses health, thou shalt quaff mine.

The *Letter* was written after Beaumont's Muse had produced something worthy of a toast from Jonson,— the *Woman-Hater* and the *Knight,* for instance (both marked by wit and by the discipline of Jonson); but not later than the end of 1612, for during most of 1613 Jonson was traveling in France as governor to Sir Walter Raleigh's "knavishly inclined" son; and after February of that year Beaumont wrote so far as I venture to conclude but one drama, *The Scornful*

Ladie; and that does not precede this *Letter* in the folio of 1647; is not printed in that folio at all. Nor was this *Letter* of a disciple written later than the great Beaumont-Fletcher plays of 1610–1611, for then Jonson was praising Beaumont for "writing better" than he himself. If there is any truth at all in the rubric to the *Letter,* the "scenes" of which Beaumont speaks as not yet "perfect" were of *The Coxcombe;* and evidence which I shall, in the proper place, adduce convinces me that that was first acted before March 25, 1610, perhaps before January 4. The play would, then, have been written about the end of 1609.

I do not wonder that, as the Prologue in the first folio tells us, it was "condemned by the ignorant multitude," not only because of its length, a fault removed in the editions which we possess, but because the larger part of the play is written by Fletcher, and in his most inartistic, and irrational, licentious vein. Beaumont, though admitted to the partnership, had not yet succeeded in hanging "plummets" on his friend's luxuriance. He contented himself with contributing to a theme of Boccaccian cuckoldry the subplot of how Ricardo, drunk, loses his betrothed, and finds her again and is forgiven,—a little story that contains all the poignancy of sorrow and poppy of romance and poetry of innocence that make the comedy readable and tolerable.

As to the first production of the *Philaster* a word must be said here, because the event marks the earliest association, concerning which we have any assurance, of the young dramatists with Shakespeare. Until

about 1609 they appear to have written for the Paul's Boys, who acted, probably in their singing-school, until 1607; and for the Queen's Revels' Children who, under various managements, had been occupying Richard Burbadge's theatre of Blackfriars since 1597. Their association with the Paul's Boys would of itself have brought them into touch with other Paul's dramatists, Dekker, Webster, Middleton, and Chapman. In their association with the Queen's Revels' Children they had been thrown closely together with Chapman again, with Jonson, and with John Day, all of whom wrote for Blackfriars; and with Marston, who not only wrote plays for the Children but had a financial interest in the company. Some of these dramatists,— Jonson, for instance, and Webster,— had occasionally written for Shakespeare's company during these years; but we have no proof that Beaumont and Fletcher had any connection with the King's Players of Shakespeare's company, as long as the Children's companies continued in their usual course at St. Paul's singing-school and Blackfriars. After 1606, however, the Paul's Boys were on the wane. Perhaps they are to be indentified with the new Children of the King's Revels, and an occupancy of Whitefriars, in 1607; but that clue soon disappears. And as to the Queen's Revels' Children, we find that in April 1608 they were suppressed for ridiculing royalty upon the stage.[1] Their manager, Henry Evans, to whom with three others Richard Burbadge had let Blackfriars in 1600, now sought to be set free from

[1] Despatch of the French Ambassador in London, April 5, 1608, quoted by Collier, *Hist. Eng. Dram. Poetry*, I, 352.

the contract; and in August 1608, the Burbadges (Richard and Cuthbert), Shakespeare, Heming, Condell, and Slye of the King's Company, took over the lease which still had many years to run.[1] Shakespeare's company had been acting at the Burbadges' theatre of the Globe since 1599,—as the Lord Chamberlain's till 1603; after that, as his Majesty's Servants. Now Shakespeare's company took charge of Blackfriars, as well; and, under their management, for about a month between December 7, 1609 and January 4, 1610 the Queen's Revels' Children, being reinstated in royal favour, resumed their acting at Blackfriars. On the latter date, the Children as reorganized, opened at Whitefriars under the management of Philip Rossiter and others; and among the first plays presented by them, there, were Jonson's *Epicoene* and, I believe, Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Coxcombe.*

But, in the process of readjustment at Blackfriars, our young partners in dramatic production must have been drawn into professional relationship with the members of Shakespeare's company and undoubtedly with Shakespeare himself. From the first quarto of *Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding,* published in 1620, we learn that this, the earliest of their great tragicomedies, was acted not by the Queen's Revels' Children, but by the King's Players, and at the Globe. From the second quarto, of 1622, we learn that it was acted also at Blackfriars: it may indeed have been first presented there. Our earliest record of the play

[1] Answer of Heming and Burbadge to Kirkham's complaint, 1612, *Greenstreet Papers* in Fleay, *Hist. Stage,* p. 235.

shows that it was in existence before October 8, 1610. *The Scourge of Folly* by John Davies of Hereford, entered for publication on that date, contains an epigram to "the well deserving Mr. John Fletcher," which runs —

> *Love lies a-bleeding,* if it should not prove
> Her utmost art to show why it doth love.
> Thou being the *Subject* (now), It raignes upon,
> Raign'st in *Arte, Judgement, and Invention:*
> *For this I love thee; and can doe no lesse*
> *For thine as faire, as faithfull* Sheepheardesse.

Since there is nothing in *Philaster, or Love Lies a-Bleeding,* to indicate a date of composition earlier than 1608, and since this is the first of Beaumont and Fletcher's dramas to be performed by Shakespeare's company, we may be fairly certain that the performance followed the readjustment of affairs between the Globe and Blackfriars in August of that year. Now, there had been regulations for years past of the City authorities and the Privy Council in accordance with which theatre in the City proper and the suburbs of Surrey and Middlesex were closed whenever the number of deaths by plague exceeded a certain limit per week. In and after 1608 this limit was set at forty; and it is probable that, in accordance with a still older regulation, the ban was not lifted until it was evident that the decrease in deaths was more than temporary.[1] That actors sometimes performed at Court while the plague rate was still prohibitive in and about the City, does not by any means justify us

[1] See Murray, *Eng. Dram. Comp.*, II, 171-191.

in assuming that they were ever allowed at such times to play in theatres thronged by the public.[1] Between August 8, 1608 and October 8, 1610, the only continuous period in which plays might have been presented by Shakespeare's company at the Globe or Blackfriars, without violating the plague law, was from December 7, 1609 to July 12, 1610; and we therefore conclude that it was during those months that Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* was first acted. The only other abatement of the plague that might have given promise of continuance was between March 2 and 23, 1609; but on March 9 the rate of deaths rose again above forty, and it is not likely that the authorities would have permitted the theatres to resume operations during those three weeks.[2]

With *Philaster* Beaumont and Fletcher leaped into the foremost rank as dramatists. I have so much to say of this tragicomedy in my discussion of the authorship of its successive scenes, that but a word may here be said concerning the reasons for its success. Hitherto, practically Shakespeare alone had written for the King's Servants romantic comedies of a serious cast; and they were generally based upon some well-known story. Here was a comedy of serious kind with a romantic and original plot, by authors comparatively new to the general public, written in a style refreshingly unhackneyed, and played in the best theatres and by the best company that London possessed. The Hamlet-like hero seeking his kingdom and his princess

[1] As suggested by Thorndike, *Infl. B. and F. on Shakespeare*, 16–18. See Murray, *Engl. Dram. Companies*, II, 175.

[2] Further discussion of the *Philaster* date will be found in Chapter XXV, below.

— the daughter of the usurper — and, through misunderstandings and misadventures, tragic apprehensions, swiftly succeeding crises, bloodshed, riot, and surprising reversals of fortune, attaining both birthright and love; the pathetic innocence and nobly futile devotion of his girl-page; the triangular affair of the affections; the humour of the secondary characters; the allurements of spectacle and masque; the atmosphere of the palace, heroic,— of the country, idyllic,— of Mile-end and its roarers of the borough, somewhat burlesque,— the diapason of the poetry from bourdon to flute,— all combined to win immediate and long continuing favour, both of the City and the Court. Beaumont had, here, become to some extent "the sobriety of Fletcher's wit"; he had restrained "his quick free will,"— not, however, so much by pruning what Fletcher wrote as by admitting him to but one-quarter of the composition. Something of the intrigue, the bustle, the spectacle, the easy conversation are Fletcher's; and his, such sexual vulgarity — very little — as stamps a scene or two. The rest is Beaumont's. As in the two great romantic dramas which followed, and in Beaumont's subplot of *The Coxcombe,* the story is of the authors' own invention. It is not necessary to trace the girl-page and her devotion to the Diana of Montemayor, or to Bandello, or even to Sidney's *Arcadia.* The girl-page was a commonplace of fiction at the time; and the differences in the conduct of this part of the story are greater than the resemblances to any one of those sources. Much more evidently is the devoted Euphrasia-Bellario a younger sister of Shakespeare's Viola. But, in gen-

eral, external influences bear upon details of character, situation, and device, not upon the construction of the play as a whole.

Toward the end of 1610 or early in 1611, the partner-dramatists gave Shakespeare's company another play,— in many respects their greatest,— *The Maides Tragedy*. Here, again, the novelty of the plot attracted, in a degree heightened even beyond that of *Philaster*. The terrible dilemma of the duped husband between allegiance to the King who has wronged him and assertion of his marital honour, the astounding effrontery of his adulterous wife, her gradual acquirement of a soul and her attempted expiation of lust by murder, the mingled nobility and unreason of her brother and her husband, and the pathetic devotion and self-provoked death of the hero's deserted sweetheart, will be sufficiently discussed elsewhere. This was the highly seasoned fare that the Jacobean public desiderated, served in courses, if not more novel, at any rate of more startling variety than even Shakespeare had offered — whose devices, restrained within limit, these young dramatists were exaggerating to the *n*-th degree. As four-fifths of the composition of this tragedy was Beaumont's, so, too, we may be sure, four-fifths of the conception and invention of the plot.[1] I have remarked, incidentally, that none of the great Beaumont-Fletcher plots is borrowed. Nearly every play, on the other hand, which Fletcher contrived alone, or in company with others than Beaumont, borrows its plot, major and minor, from some well known source, classical, historical, French,

[1] See Chapter XXV, below.

Spanish, or Italian. Mr. G. C. Macaulay states the bare truth, when he says that "in constructive faculty, at least, Beaumont was markedly superior to his colleague." Here there are traces, indeed, of external suggestion: something of Aspatia's career in relation to Amintor, who has deserted her, may be an echo of Parthenia's in the *Arcadia;* and the quarrel of Melantius and Amintor reminds one of that between Brutus and Cassius in *Julius Cæsar;* but the plot has no definite source.

The characterization and the poetry, "the strength and sweetness, and high choice of brain" are Beaumont's; so, too, the marvelous subtlety of dramatic device. Save in that one-fifth to which Fletcher was admitted. There Fletcher, in beauty and in tragic power, is giving us the best that he has so far produced: over-histrionic, to be sure, but of victorious excellence. And that one-fifth, for the first and almost only time in Fletcher's career as a dramatist is "untainted by obscenity."

In an anecdote preserved by Fuller, who was seventeen years of age when Fletcher died, we may fancy that we catch a glimpse of our bachelors at work upon this very play. The dramatists "meeting once in a Tavern to contrive the rude draught of a Tragedy, Fletcher undertook to *Kill the King* therein; whose words being overheard by a listener (though his Loyalty not to be blamed herein) he was accused of high Treason, till the mistake soon appearing, that the plot was only against a Drammatick and Scenical King, all wound off in merriment.[1] History and fable have

[1] Dyce, as above, *B. and F.*, I, xxxii.

fastened similar stories upon famous men; but if this one is authentic it undoubtedly refers to the writing of *The Maides Tragedy,* for, as we shall see, the killing of its King was one of the few scenes contributed by Fletcher. And the story adds colour to the ridicule which Beaumont in 1607 had heaped upon the intelligencer that lives in ale-houses and taverns; . . . "and brings informations picked out of broken words in men's common talk."

The connection thus formed with Shakespeare's company was continued by Beaumont, at any rate, until 1612, and by Fletcher as long as he lived. Before the end of 1611 the King's Players had presented to the public the last of this trio of dramatic masterpieces, *A King and No King.* In terrible fascination, this story of a man and woman struggling against love because they think they are brother and sister is as powerful as *The Maides Tragedy.* In poetry and in characterization, as well as in humour, it is grander than *Philaster.* But in beauty and pathos its subject did not permit it to equal either; and in dénouement, tragicomic and perforce somewhat strained, it is surpassed by the *Tragedy.* Of its defects as well as merits, I have so much to say later, that I must refrain now. The plot is as striking an example of constructive invention as those that had preceded. Some of the names are to be found in Xenophon's *Cyropædeia* (Books III-VI) and in Herodotus (Book VII); and hints for situation and characterization may have been derived from these sources, and the passion of Arbaces for his supposed sister from Fauchet's account of Thierry of

France,— but such indebtedness is naught.[1] Three-quarters of the play is Beaumont's; and that large portion includes the majestic passion and conflict, the tragic irony and suspense, of *A King and No King;* in fact,— the whole serious plot, and part of the humorous by-play. Fletcher's slight contribution is principally of complementary scenes and low comedy. In these the curb upon his fanciful rhetoric and hilarious wit has been somewhat relaxed. In the character of the roaring Bessus, Beaumont himself gives rein with the *élan* of the comic artist; for the Bessus of Beaumont's scenes would have gone on a strike if he had not been suffered to "talk bawdy" between brags. Beaumont for all his sobriety and clean mirth was not a prude; and he was n't writing the psalms of Robert Wisdom.

This play was as popular as those that had preceded. The King's Players acted it at Court in December of the year in which it had been first performed. And between October 1612 and March 1613, assisting in the festivities for the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth with the Elector Palatine, they presented before royalty all three of the great Beaumont-Fletcher plays. These were numbers in a series of thirteen that included, as well, the *Much Ado, Tempest, Winter's Tale, Merry Wives, Othello,* and *Julius Caesar* of Shakespeare. They also presented about the same time, in a series of six acted before the King (including *1 Henry IV, Much Ado,* and *The Alchemist*), one

[1] See Alden's edition, p. 172 (*Belles Lettres*), and Thorndike's citation of Fauchet, *Les Antiquitez et Histoires Gauloises, etc.* (1599), *Infl. of B. and F.*, p. 82.

of Fletcher's comedies of manners and intrigue, *The Captaine,* and a play utterly lost, called *Cardenna,* in which it is supposed that Fletcher collaborated with the Master himself.

That our dramatists, however, after their association was formed with Shakespeare and his company, by no means severed their connection with the company for which they had written in their younger days, the Children of the Queen's Revels, appears from the fact that during the same festivities a tragedy written by them about 1611, *Cupid's Revenge,* was played by the Children three times, and their romantic comedy, *The Coxcombe* twice; and that, in 1615 or the beginning of 1616, the Children presented at the new Blackfriars what was, probably, the last product of the Beaumont-Fletcher partnership, *The Scornful Ladie.*

Neither *Cupid's Revenge* nor *The Scornful Ladie* (though the latter, at least, was very popular and had a long life upon the stage) is a drama of high distinction. The former is a blend of two stories from Sidney's *Arcadia,*— the story of the vengeance of Cupid upon the princess Erona (Hidaspes in the play) who caused to be destroyed the images and pictures of Cupid, and was consequently doomed to an infatuation for a base-born man,— and the painful career of Plangus (Leucippus in the play) who, having an intrigue "with a private man's wife" (the monstrous Bacha of the play) gave her up to his father, swearing to her virtue, only to find that she should attempt to renew her *liaison* with him and, failing, scheme his downfall. The dramatists made considerable altera-

tion, and added to the sources. But though the main plot — that of Leucippus and Bacha — offered magnificent possibilities, they fail of realization. Beaumont wrote about one-half of the play, and it is in his scenes that whatever there is of moral struggle and sublimity, of pathetic irony and of poetry, appears.

The Scornful Ladie, which I assign to this late date partly because of an allusion to the negotiations for a Spanish marriage, 1614–1616, is principally of Fletcher's composition. It is of the type of his earlier and later comedies of intrigue. Like most of them it is extremely well contrived for presentation upon the stage and it was, as I have said, most successful. The merit of the play lies, not in any element of poetry or vital romance, but in humorous and realistic characterization, easy dialogue, and clever device. The dramatists deserve all credit for the ingenious invention, for here again there is no known source. Beaumont's contribution, about one-third, is distinguished by the observation and the *vis comica* already displayed in the *Woman-Hater* and the *Knight of the Burning Pestle* and *King and No King.* But he is not dominating the details. When they wrote a comedy of intrigue, Fletcher sat at the head of the table. It is possible, however, that some of the "rules and standard wit" which Francis was so soon to leave to his friend "in legacy" were here applied; for the play is less exuberantly reckless in tone than several which Fletcher wrote alone. The three masterpieces of romantic drama, Beaumont controlled in composi-

tion, and revised. Of this play he did not finish the revision. It was written about 1614 or 1615, after he had settled in the country with his wife, and not long before his death.[1]

[1] See below, Chapter XXVI.

CHAPTER VIII

RELATIONS WITH SHAKESPEARE, JONSON, AND OTHERS IN THE THEATRICAL WORLD

THOUGH the young poets did not begin to write for the King's Men before 1609, it is impossible that they should not have met Shakespeare, face to face, earlier in the century, whether at the Mermaid in Bread-street, Cheapside, where perhaps befel those "wit-combates betwixt him and Ben Jonson," or about the Globe in Southwark or the theatre in Blackfriars,—which, though leased to the Revels' Children, belonged to Shakespeare's friend Richard Burbadge,—or at the lodgings with Mountjoy the tiremaker, on the corner of Silver and Monkwell Streets, where the master had lived from 1598 to 1604, and where, for anything we know to the contrary, he continued to live for several years more.[1] They would pass the house on their way from the Bankside north to St. Giles, Cripplegate, when they wished to observe what Juby and the rest of the Prince's Players were putting on at the Fortune, or on their way back to take ale with Jonson at his house in Blackfriars, or to follow Nat. Field or Carey, acting in one of their own or Jonson's plays at the private theatre close by.

[1] Wallace, *New Shakespeare Discoveries, Harper's Maga.*, March, 1910.

That the young poets, even during their discipleship to Jonson were familiar with the poetry and dramatic methods of Shakespeare the most cursory reader will observe. Their plays from the first, whether jointly or singly written, abound in reminiscences of his work. But more particularly is he echoed by Beaumont. The echo is sometimes of playful parody, as in the " huffing part " which the grocer's prentice of the *Knight of the Burning Pestle* steals from Hotspur: —

By heaven, methinks it were an easie leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd Moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the Sea,
Where never fathome line toucht any ground,
And pluck up drownèd honour from the lake of Hell;

or as in *The Woman-Hater,* where it looks very much as if this stylist of twenty-two was poking fun at the circumlocutions of Shakespeare's Helena in *All's Well that Ends Well.* Labouring to say " two days " in accents suitable to a monarch's ear, she had evolved:

Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring
Their fiery torches his diurnal ring,
Ere twice in murk and accidental damp
Moist Hesperus hath quenched his sleepy lamp;
Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass
Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass,
What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly.

In terms strikingly reminiscent of this, Beaumont's courtier Valore instructs the gourmand of *The Woman-Hater,* how to address royalty:

You must not talk to him [the Duke]
As you doe to an ordinary man,
Honest plain sence, but you must wind about him.
For example: if he should aske you what o'clock it is,
You must not say, "If it please your grace, 'tis nine";
But thus, "Thrice three aclock, so please my Sovereign";
Or thus, "Look how many Muses there doth dwell
Upon the sweet banks of the learned Well,
And just so many stroaks the clock hath struck.

And when the Duke asks Lazarillo, thus instructed, "how old are you?" we can imagine with what mirth the graceless Beaumont puts into his mouth:

Full eight and twenty several Almanacks
Have been compilèd all for several years,
Since first I drew this breath; four prentiships
Have I most truly servèd in this world;
And eight and twenty times hath Phoebus' car
Run out his yearly course since —.
Duke. I understand you, sir.
Lucio. How like an ignorant poet he talks!

Is it possible that associating with the literary school of the day, his brother John, Drayton, Chapman, and Ben Jonson, the young satirist, here vents something like spleen? Or is this purely dramatic utterance?

Like parodies of phrases in *Hamlet, Antony and Cleopatra,* and other Shakespearean plays ripple the stream of Beaumont's humour. They are, however, always good-natured. But if Beaumont laughs when Shakespeare exaggerates, he also pays him in his later plays the tribute of imitation in numerous poetic borrowings of serious lines and telling situations: as

where the King in *Philaster* tries to pray but, like the kneeling Claudius, despairs —

> How can I
> Looke to be heard of gods that must be just,
> Praying upon the ground I hold by wrong? —

or "in the Hamlet-like situation and character of Philaster" himself; as, for instance, when to the usurping King who has said of him, "Sure hees possest," Philaster retorts:

> Yes, with my fathers spirit. Its here, O King,
> A dangerous spirit! Now he tells me, King,
> I was a Kings heire, bids me be a King,
> And whispers to me, these are all my subjects.
> Tis strange he will not let me sleepe, but dives
> In to my fancy, and there gives me shapes
> That kneele and doe me service, cry me king:
> But I 'le suppresse him: he 's a factious spirit,
> And will undoe me.

The resemblance of the controversy between Melantius and Amintor to that of Brutus with Cassius has already been noticed; and everyone will acknowledge the resemblance of the "quizzical reserve" of his Scornful Lady to Olivia's, of Aspatia's melancholy in the *Maides Tragedy* to Ophelia's, and of Bellario's situation in *Philaster* to that of Viola in *Twelfth Night*.[1] This last play, indeed, acted, as we have seen, in the

[1] For these and other reminiscences of Shakespeare, see Alden's edition of Beaumont (*Belles Lettres Series*), XVI; Macaulay's *Beaumont;* Leonhardt in *Anglia,* VIII, 424; Oliphant in *Engl. Studien,* XIV, 53-94, Koeppel's *Quellen-studien* in *Münchener Beiträge,* XI.

Middle Temple when Beaumont was a freshman in the Inns of Court, affects Beaumont's method and style, more than any other save the *Pericles* (1607, or January to May 1608), which prepared the way for the more important later romantic dramas of Shakespeare himself as well as for those of Beaumont and Fletcher.

During the years when Shakespeare's company was producing their romantic dramas, they were breathing, with Shakespeare, Burbadge, and Heming, the atmosphere of the Globe and Blackfriars; and, after Shakespeare had taken up a more continuous residence at Stratford, in 1611, Fletcher, at any rate, not only kept in touch with the remaining shareholders and actors of the Globe but with the Master himself, and conversed and wrote with him on various occasions. These may have fallen either at the New Place at Stratford, where the now wealthy country gentleman was wont to entertain his friends, or when Shakespeare came to town — as in May 1612. At that time his former host, Mountjoy's, son-in-law was suing the tiremaker for his wife's unpaid dower, and "William Shakespeare of Stratford upon Aven in the Countye of Warwicke, Gentleman" who had helped to make the marriage, was summoned as a witness.[1] Or between July and November of that year, when the "base fellow" Kirkham was bringing against Burbadge and Heming a suit concerning the profits of the Blackfriars theatre, in which as a shareholder Shakespeare, too, must have been interested; and when Christopher

[1] Wallace, *New Shakespeare Discoveries* (*Harper's Maga.*, March, 1910).

Brooke of the pastoral poets in Beaumont's Inns of Court was of the "councell" for Shakespeare's company.[1] Or in March 1613, when Shakespeare was negotiating for the house in Blackfriars which he bought that month from Henry Walker. In the latter year the King's Players performed two plays in the writing of which there is reason to believe that Shakespeare and Fletcher participated: *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* first published as "by the memorable worthies of their time, Mr. John Fletcher and Mr. William Shakespeare, gentlemen," in a quarto of 1634; and a lost play licensed for publication as the "*History of Cardenio* by Fletcher and Shakespeare," in 1653. Of the former, critics are generally agreed that Fletcher wrote about a dozen scenes and that Shakespeare in all probability wrote others. Maybe, however, Fletcher, and perhaps later Massinger, merely revised and completed Shakespeare's original draft of the play left in the company's hands. That *The Two Noble Kinsmen* borrows its antimasque from our friend Beaumont's *Maske of the Inner Temple,* which was presented in February 1613, may be construed as indicating that he, too, still had some connection with Shakespeare's company. But it is more likely that he was now happily married and settled in Kent, and did n't care what they did with his plays. Probably the Shakespeare-Fletcher play was acted soon after Beaumont's, and in the same year. With regard to the authorship of the *Cardenio* we have nothing but the publisher's statement; but we know that the play was written after the appearance, in 1612, of the story

[1] See the *Greenstreet Papers,* in Fleay, *Hist. Stage,* 239, 250.

upon which it is based, in Shelton's English translation of the first part of *Don Quixote;* and that it was acted at Court by Shakespeare's and Fletcher's company in May and June 1613.

The partnership of Fletcher and Shakespeare in the writing of these two plays has been questioned, but as to their collaboration in a third, *Henry VIII,* there is not much possibility of doubt. In the conception of the leading characters Shakespeare is present, and in many of their finest lines, and specifically in at least five scenes; while Fletcher appears in practically all the rest. The play was acted by the King's Men at the Globe on June 29, 1613, and was included as Shakespeare's by his judicious editors and intimate friends, Heming and Condell, in the folio of 1623.

During these years of fruition the friendship with Jonson, who was writing at the time for both the companies to which our young dramatists gave their plays, continued apparently without interruption. It is attested by commendatory verses written by Beaumont for *The Silent Woman,* which was acted early in 1610, and by verses of both Fletcher and Beaumont prefixed to Jonson's tragedy of *Catiline,* published in 1611. On the latter occasion Beaumont commends Jonson's contempt for "the wild applause of common people," and declares that he is "three ages yet from understood;" while Fletcher even more enthusiastically avers,—

> Thy labours shall outlive thee; and, like gold
> Stampt for continuance, shall be current where
> There is a sun, a people, or a year.

The generous and graceful response of Ben to the



BEN JONSON

From the miniature belonging to Mr. Evelyn Shirley

reverence of the younger of the twain appears in a tribute the date of which is uncertain, but which was included by the author among his *Epigrams,* entered in the Stationers' Registers, 1612.

To Francis Beaumont.

How I doe love thee, Beaumont and thy Muse,
That unto me dost such religion use!
How I doe feare my selfe, that am not worth
The least indulgent thought thy pen drops forth!
At once thou mak'st me happie, and unmak'st;
And giving largely to me, more thou tak'st.
What fate is mine, that so it selfe bereaves?
What art is thine, that so thy friend deceives?
When even there, where most thou praisest mee,
For writing better, I must envie thee.

Since Jonson was not given to indiscriminate laudation of his contemporaries in dramatic production, we may surmise that this tribute to the art of Beaumont follows rather than precedes the appearance of *Philaster,* and of perhaps both *The Maides Tragedy* and *A King and No King.* And whether there is any basis or not for the tradition handed down by Dryden [1] that Beaumont was "so accurate a judge of plays that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and, 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots,"—there is here evidence, sufficiently convincing, of the high esteem in which "the least indulgent thought" and the large "giving" of the brilliant and independent gentleman-dramatist were held by the acknowledged classicist and dictator of the stage.

[1] *An Essay of Dramatick Poesie.*

From the various sources already indicated and from contemporary testimony, later to be cited, it is easy to derive a definite conception of the world of dramatists and actors in which Beaumont and Fletcher moved. They knew, and were properly appraised by, Drayton, Jonson, Chapman, Shakespeare, Webster, Dekker, Heywood, Massinger, Field, Daborne, Marston, Day, and Middleton,— with all of whom they were associated either in combats of poetry and wit or in the presentation of plays at Blackfriars, Whitefriars, or the Globe. Among actors their acquaintance included Field, Taylor, Carey, and others of the Queen's Revels' Children, and Richard Burbadge, Heming, Condell, Ostler, Cook, and Lowin of the King's Company. In what esteem they were held during these years we have evidence in the verses already quoted from Drayton, Jonson, Chapman, and Field. In the generous dedication of *The White Devil* by John Webster, in 1612, we find them ranked with the best: "Detraction," says he, "is the sworne friend to ignorance. For mine owne part I have ever truly cherisht my good opinion of other mens worthy Labours, especially of that full and haightened stile of maister *Chapman:* The labour'd and understanding workes of maister *Jonson:* The no lesse worthy composures of the both worthily excellent Maister *Beamont* and Maister *Fletcher:* And lastly (without wrong last to be named), the right happy and copious industry of M. *Shake-speare,* M. *Decker,* and M. *Heywood,* wishing what I write may be read by their light: Protesting that, in the strength of mine owne judgement, I

know them so worthy, that though I rest silent in my owne worke, yet to most of theirs I dare (without flattery) fix that of *Martiall — non norunt, Haec monumenta mori.*

CHAPTER IX

THE "MASQUE OF THE INNER TEMPLE": THE PASTORALISTS, AND OTHER CONTEMPORARIES AT THE INNS OF COURT

OF royal patronage we have had evidence in the fact that during the festivities of October 16, 1612 to March 1, 1613, no fewer than five of the Beaumont-Fletcher plays were presented at Court, by the King's Servants and the Queen's Revels' Children, — some of them two and even three times. Our poets are accordingly regarded by the great as dramatists of like distinction with Shakespeare, Jonson, and Chapman, the authors of most of the other plays then performed.

Of the esteem in which Beaumont individually was held, not only at Court but by his fellows of the Inner Temple, evidence is afforded by the fact that when they were called upon, in company with the gentlemen of Gray's Inn, to celebrate the marriage, February 14, 1613, of the Princess Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine, with a masque, they did not, like the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn, go out of their own group of poets for a dramatist, but chose him. The selection was but natural: he had already contributed to *The Maides Tragedy* a masque of the very essence of dreams, executed with singular grace and melody.

The subject decided upon for the present gorgeous spectacle was the "marrying of the Thames to the Rhine." The structure and stage machinery were invented by Inigo Jones, who was, also, stage architect for Chapman's rival masque of *Plutus,* presented on February 15, by the gentlemen of the Middle Temple and Lincoln's Inn. To the success of Beaumont's production, that patron of masques, Sir Francis Bacon, then his majesty's Solicitor-General, contributed in large measure: "You, Sir Francis Bacon, especially," says the author in his Dedication of the published copy, "as you did then by your countenance and loving affection advance it, so let your good word grace it and defend it, which is able to add value to the greatest and least matters." In a contemporary letter of John Chamberlain to Mistris Carleton, Bacon is called "the chief contriver" of the spectacle; an attribution which leads us to infer that he "advanced" it not solely by "loving affection" but by funds for the tremendous expense. For, as we have already observed, in other cases, as of the Masque of Flowers, presented for a noble marriage in 1614 by Gray's Inn, Bacon is not only patron but purse, permitting no one to share expenses with him: "Sir Francis Bacon," writes Chamberlain, "prepares a masque to honour this marriage, which will stand him in above £2,000."

Beaumont's masque, which was to have been performed at Whitehall on Tuesday evening, the 16th, had ill fortune on the first attempt. The gentlemen-masquers, desiring to vary their pomp from that of Lincoln's Inn and the Middle Temple, which had been

on horse-back and in chariots, made a progress by water from Winchester-House to Whitehall, seated in the King's royal barge, "attended with a multitude of barges and galleys, with all variety of loud music, and several peals of ordnance; and led by two admirals." The royal family witnessed their approach; and, as Chamberlain in the letter mentioned above says, "they were receved at the privie stayres: and great expectation theyre was that they shold every way exceed theyre competitors that went before them both in devise daintines of apparell and above all in dauncing (wherein they are held excellent) and esteemed far the properer men: but by what yll planet yt fell out I know not, they came home as they went with out doing anything, the reason whereof I cannot yet learne thoroughly, so but only was that the hall was so full that yt was not possible to avoyde yt or make roome for them; besides that most of the Ladies were in the galleries to see them land, and could not get in, but the worst of all was that the king was so wearied and sleepie with sitting up almost two whole nights before that he had no edge to yt. Whereupon S^r^ Fra: Bacon adventured to interest his maiestie that by this disgrace he wold not as yt were burie them quicke; and I heare the king shold aunswer that then they must burie him quicke for he could last no longer, but with all gave them very goode wordes and appointed them to come again on saterday: but the grace of theyre maske is quite gon when theyre apparell hath ben already shewed and theyre devises vented, so that how yt will fall out, God knows, for they are much discouraged, and out

of countenance; and the world sayes yt comes to passe after the old proverb — the properer men the worse lucke." [1]

On that day, accordingly, the masque was presented, "in the new Banketting-House which for a kind of amends was granted to them"; and with marked success. "At the entrance of their Majesties and their Highnesses," writes the Venetian ambassador to the Doge and Senate, May 10, 1613, "one saw the scene, with forests; on a sudden half of it changed to a great mountain with four springs at its feet. The subject of the Masque was that Jove and Juno desiring to honour the wedding and the conjunction of two such noble rivers, the Thames and the Rhine, sent separately Mercury and Iris, who appeared; and Mercury then praised the couple and the Royal house, and wishing to make a ballet suitable to the conjunction of two such streames, he summoned from the four fountains, whence they spring and which are fed by rain, four nymphs who hid among the clouds and the stars that ought to bring rain. They then danced, but Iris said that a dance of one sex only was not a live dance. Then appeared four cupids, while from the Temple of Jove, came five idols and they danced with the stars and the nymphs. Then Iris, after delivering her speech, summoned Flora, caused a light rain to fall, and then came a dance of shepherds. Then in a moment the other half of the scene changed, and one saw a great plateau with two pavilions, and

[1] John Chamberlain to Mris. Carleton, 18 February, 1612–3, in *State Papers (Domestic) James I*, LXXII, No. 30. Quoted by Miss Sullivan, *Court Masques of James I*, p. 76 (1913).

in them one hundred and fifty Knights of Olympus,—then more tents, like a host encamped. On the higher ground was the Temple of Olympian Jove all adorned with statues of gold and silver, and served by a number of priests with music and lights in golden Candelabra. The knights were in long robes of silk and gold, the priests in gold and silver. The knights danced, their robes being looped up with silver, and their dance represented the introduction of the Olympian games into this kingdom. After the ballet was over their Majesties and their Highnesses passed into a great Hall especially built for the purpose, where were long tables laden with comfits and thousands of mottoes. After the King had made the round of the tables everything was in a moment rapaciously swept away." [1]

Beaumont had introduced innovations — two antimasques, or "subtle, capricious dances" accompanied by spectacular or comic dumb-show, instead of one, and new and varied characters in each, instead of the stereotyped Witches, Satyrs, Follies, etc. His Nymphs, Hyades, blind Cupids, and half vivified Statuas from Jove's altar, of the first antimasque occasioned great amusement, so that the King called for them again at the end —"but one of the Statuas by that time was undressed." And the May-dance of the second, with its rural characters — Pedant, Lord and Lady of the May, country clown and wench, host and hostess, he-baboon and she-baboon, he-fool and she-fool — stirred laughter and applause that

[1] Foscarini in *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian,* XII, No. 832. Quoted by Miss Sullivan, *op. cit.,* p. 77.

drowned the music. The main masque was stately, and fitly symbolic of the occasion. And one at least of the songs, that sung by the twelve white-robed priests, each playing upon his lute, before Jupiter's altar, has the rare lyrical quality of Beaumont's best manner,—

> Shake off your heavy trance,
> And leap into a dance,
> Such as no mortals use to tread,
> Fit only for Apollo
> To play to, for the Moon to lead,
> And all the Stars to follow!

We may be sure that the poet received his meed of praise from King, Princess, and Elector, and from officials of the Court — the Earl of Nottingham, Lord Privy Seal, and Bacon, "the chief contriver"; and that he sat high at the "solemn supper in the new Marriage-room" which the King made them on the Sunday,— maybe "at the same board" with the King who doubtless jested much at the expense of Prince Charles and his followers. For they had to pay for the feast, "having laid a wager for the charges, and lost it in running at the ring." [1]

If it had not been customary for members of the Inns of Court to retain connection with the Society to which they belonged, even after they had ceased to be in residence, especially if still living in the City, we might infer from his authorship of this masque that Beaumont had kept in touch with the Inner Tem-

[1] *Calendar State Papers* (*Domestic*), 1611–1618, pp. 171, 172, 175.

ple. Though he had not professed the law, the quiddities of its parlance enliven various passages of his *Woman-Hater* and of the plays which he later wrote with Fletcher. Whether he kept his name on the books or not, the Inner Temple was in a social sense his club for life; and it was to "those Gentlemen that were his acquaintance there" that the publisher Mosely turned for help when searching for his portrait in 1647. The students of his generation were by 1612, many of them, utter barristers, ancients, and benchers: he would affiliate with them; and that he should be acquainted with the "Gentlemen who were actors" in his masque goes without saying. This was an occasion of tremendous moment to the members of the allied Houses. They were conferring the highest honour upon their poet, and every man on the books of each Inn knew him by name and face. One of the Fellows, John, afterwards Sir John, Fenner provides a messenger "to fetch M^r^ Beaumont," and advances 10*li.* "toward the mask business." Another, Lewis Hele is twice paid 70*li.* toward the same business. From Chamberlain's letter, we learn that the passage by water to Whitehall "cost them better than three hundred pound,"— from two thousand to twenty-four hundred pounds, in the money of to-day. From the records of the Societies for "the 10th of King James," we find that "the charge in apparell of the Actors in that great Mask at White-hall was supported" by each Society; "the Readers at Gray's Inn being each man assessed at 4*l.*, the Ancients, and such as at that time were to be called Ancients, at 2*l.* 10*s.* apiece, the Barristers at 2*l.* a man, and the Stu-

dents at 20*s.*"; and that on May 4, 1613, the Inner Temple is still indebted over and besides the contribution of the House "for the late show and sports . . . not so little as 1200*li.*,"— that is to say, from seven to nine thousand pounds according our present valuation.[1] Beaumont in his Dedication of the quarto (published soon afterwards) to the worthy Sir Francis Bacon and the grave and learned Bench of the anciently-allied Houses of Gray's Inn and the Inner Temple, is addressing friends when he says "Yee that spared no time nor travell in the setting forth, ordering, and furnishing of this Masque . . . will not thinke much now to looke backe upon the effects of your owne care and worke: for that whereof the successe was then doubtfull, is now happily performed and gratiously accepted. And that which you were then to thinke of in straites of time, you may now peruse at leysure."

Of the gentlemen-masquers, and "the towardly yoong, active, gallant Gentlemen of the same houses," who, as their convoy "set forth from Winchester-House which was the *Rende vous* towards the Court, about seven of the clock at night," on that occasion, the most directly interested in the event would be a group of literary friends of which the central figure was William Browne of Tavistock. He had been at Clifford's Inn, one of the preparatory schools for the Inner Temple, on the other side of Fleet Street, since about 1608, had migrated to the Inner Temple in November 1611, and had been admitted a member

[1] Dugdale's *Origines Juridicales,* as cited by Dyce, *B. and F.,* II, 453. Inderwick, *op. cit.,* II, xxxix–xlii, 72, 77, etc. Douthwaite, *op. cit.,* 231. Nichols's *Progresses of King James,* II, 566, 591.

in March 1612. He was some five years younger than Beaumont, and, like Beaumont, was at just that time on intimate terms of friendship with the last of the Elizabethan pastoralists, Michael Drayton,— on terms of reciprocal admiration and friendship also with Beaumont's dramatic associates, Jonson and Chapman; and he had himself, in 1613, been engaged for three years upon the composition of the charming *First Book* of his *Britannia's Pastorals.* In a letter written some years later to a lover of the Pastoral,— the translator of Tasso's Aminta, *Henery Reynolds, Esq.,— Of Poets and Poesy,* and published in 1627, Drayton couples William Browne so closely with Sir John and Francis Beaumont that even if the trio were not, in various ways, affiliated with the same legal Society we could not escape the conclusion that the brothers were near and dear to Browne. " Then," writes Drayton, after mentioning other literary acquaintances,—

> Then the two Beaumonts and my Browne arose,
> My deare companions whom I freely chose
> My bosome friends; and in their severall wayes,
> Rightly borne Poets, and in these last dayes,
> Men of much note, and no lesse nobler parts,—
> Such as have freely tould to me their hearts,
> As I have mine to them.

We may proceed upon the assumption that it would have been impossible for these bosom friends of Drayton, members of the same club, not to have known each other. Especially, if we recall that Browne was a literary disciple of Fletcher in pastoral poetry, between 1610 and 1616, and that he had Beaumont's

masque and poetic fame in mind when, in the Dedication of his own *Masque of Ulysses and Circe,* presented by the same Society of the Inner Temple not quite two years later, January 13, 1615, he said, "If it degenerate in kind from those other our Society hath produced, blame yourselves for not seeking to a happier Muse."

I am at pains thus to emphasize the acquaintance of Browne and Beaumont, because our acquaintance with the latter is enriched if we may regard him as familiarly associated with the literary coterie of the Inns of Court. Browne and Beaumont had friends in common beside Drayton, Chapman, and Jonson. To, and of, Elizabeth, the daughter of Sir Philip Sidney, Beaumont writes, as we shall presently notice, in terms of admiration and intimacy. And it is for Mary, the sister of Sir Philip, that William Browne composes, in or after 1621, the immemorial epitaph,

> Underneath this sable hearse
> Lies the subject of all verse:
> Sydney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
> Death, ere thou hast slain another,
> Fair, and learn'd, and good as shee
> Time shall throw his dart at thee.

To this Pembroke, William Herbert, third Earl, Browne dedicates the *Second Book* of the *Pastorals,* 1616, which contains the beautiful tribute to Sidney and his *Arcadia;* and Pembroke shows his regard for the young poet by appointing him tutor to a wealthy ward, and later taking him into the service of his own family at Wilton. In 1614 John Davies of Here-

ford wrote the third eclogue appended to Browne's *Shepherd's Pipe,* in which he figures as old Wernock, and Browne as Willy; and, in 1616, commendatory verses to the *Second Book* of Browne's *Pastorals,*— beginning "Pipe on, sweet swaine." He had already in 1610, addressed "the most ingenious Mr. Francis Beaumont" in an epigram of like familiarity and devotion:

Some that thy name abbreviate, call thee Franck:
So may they well, if they respect thy witt;
For like rich corne (that some fools call too ranck)
All cleane Wit-reapers still are griping it;
And could I sow for thee to reape and use,
I should esteeme it manna for the Muse.[1]

Another of this little group of late Spenserian pastoralists was, as we shall later see, an admirer of Beaumont. This is William Basse, probably the composer of the lines *In Laudem Authoris,* signed W. B., and prefixed to the 1602 edition of *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus.* With the commendatory verses of Davies, George Wither, Thomas Wenman, and others in Browne's *Second Book* of the *Pastorals,* appear some again signed W. B. "It is just possible," according to the most recent editor of Browne's poems,[2] "that Basse and Browne were kinsmen." It is certain that Basse was a retainer in the family of the poetic Thomas Wenman who was Browne's contemporary at the Inner Temple. Basse, himself, had

[1] *To Worthy Persons,* in the volume entitled *The Scourge of Folly.*

[2] Gordon Goodwin, in *The Muses' Library,* 1894, p. 132.

published three pastoral elegies in 1602, and he was still writing pastorals half a century later. Another of this group, George Wither, had since 1606 been of one of the adjoining Inns of Chancery. He is the Roget, Thyrsis, Philarete of this pastoral field. In 1614, he wrote the third eclogue supplementary to Browne's *Shepherd's Pipe;* and in 1615 he was a neighbor of the Inner Temple poets, at Lincoln's Inn. In that eclogue he speaks of a Valentine on "the Wedding of fair Thame and Rhine" which he had composed on the occasion of the royal marriage; and in the first *Epithalamium* of the Valentine, he refers explicitly to the masques of Chapman and Beaumont. He must have known both those "Heliconian wits." "I 'm none," he says with self-depreciation,—

I 'm none of those that have the means or place
With shows of cost to do your nuptials grace;
But only master of mine own desire,
Am hither come with others to admire.
I am not of those Heliconian wits,
Whose pleasing strains the court's known humour fits,
But a poor rural shepherd, that for need
Can make sheep music on an oaten reed.

This "faithful though an humble swain" was of distinctive repute among Beaumont's associates by 1615: no less for the lyric ease of his *Shepherd's Hunting,* or of his

Shall I wasting in despair
Die because a woman 's fair?—

than for the "plain, moral speaking" of the *Abuses Stript and Whipt* that in 1613–14 had brought him a

year's imprisonment in the Marshalsea. Jonson later "personates" him as Chronomastix, or whipper of the times, in a masque at Court; and Beaumont's, and Fletcher's friend, Massinger, introduces him by allusion, in his *Duke of Milan,* about 1620, "I have had a fellow," says the Officer in Act III, ii, of that play —

> That could endite forsooth and make fine metres
> To tinkle in the ears of ignorant madams,
> That for defaming of great men, was sent me
> Threadbare and lousy.

Still another member of this circle of poets associated with the Inns of Court is the Cuddy of the pastoral poems, the intimate friend of Wither and Browne,— Christopher Brooke, who, though he does not cut much of a figure in his *Elegies,* or in his *Ghost of Richard III,* was a lovable and hearty friend, and a distinguished Bencher of Lincoln's Inn. That Brooke was intimate with Shakespeare's company of the King's Servants, at just the period that Beaumont and Fletcher were most closely associated with that company, we have already noticed. As one of the barristers who, in 1612, defended Burbadge and Heming against the bill of complaint brought by Kirkham for recovery of profits in the Blackfriars theatre, he had much to do with having the "plaintiff's bill cleerly and absolutely dismissed out of this courte." [1]

This community of friendship with Browne and Browne's circle gives us, by inference, a clue to an extended list of the gentlemen of London with whom Beaumont cannot have altogether failed to be ac-

[1] See *Greenstreet Papers,* VIII, Fleay, *Hist. Stage,* 250.

quainted. Browne succeeded Beaumont as poet of the Inner Temple, and the friends of the former in that Society would be known to the latter.

Among those who wrote verses laudatory of Browne's *Pastorals* between 1613 and 1616, was his "learned friend," John Selden, the jurist and antiquary, whose "chamber was in the paper buildings which looke towards the garden." He kept, says Aubrey, "a plentifull table, and was never without learned company": frequently that of Jonson, Drayton, and Camden; and, we may be certain, of John Fletcher, too; for on his mother's side, Selden as his coat of arms and epitaph prove, and as Hasted tells us in his *History of Kent,* was of the "equestrian" family of Bakers to which Fletcher's stepsisters belonged. Selden was of Beaumont's age to a year, and had been of the Society since 1604. For Browne's book Edward Heyward, also, wrote verses,—Selden's most devoted friend and chamber-fellow,"—to whom (Aubrey again) "he dedicated his *Titles of Honour,*" 1614. Heyward came from Norfolk and was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1604. And with Selden must be also bracketed, Thomas Wenman, of Oxfordshire; for so Suckling brackets him in the *Session of the Poets:*

> The poets met the other day,
> And Apollo was at the meeting, they say . . .
> 'Twas strange to see how they flocked together:
> There was Selden, and he stood next to the chaire,
> And Wenman not far off, which was very faire.

Wenman came to the Inner Temple in 1613; he ex-

presses in his complimentary verses to Browne his wonder that the pastoralist can frame such worthy poetry while as yet "scarce a hair grows up thy chin to grace." Wenman was the son of that Sir Richard whose wife was implicated in the Gunpowder Plot by Mrs. [Elizabeth] Vaux. He succeeded to an Irish peerage in 1640. There was, also, Thomas Gardiner, the son of a rector in Essex. He came to the Inner Temple in 1609, and in 1641 was knighted for his loyalty to King Charles. There was, though not of the Inner Temple, Browne's favourite companion, William Ferrar, the Alexis of the pastoral circle. Ferrar was admitted to the Middle Temple in 1610, and died young. He must have been a graceful and lovable youth, if we may judge from Wither's and Browne's tributes to him. Through his father, "an eminent London merchant, who was interested in the adventures of Hawkins, Drake, and Raleigh," Browne and Beaumont might, if in no other way, have met with Sir Richard and Sir Walter. There were, also, writing praises to Browne, the brothers Croke, sons of Sir John Croke of the King's Bench. They were both of Christ's Church, Oxford, Charles and Unton; and they became students of the Inner Temple in 1609. Charles was something of a poet. In 1613 he was Professor of Rhetoric at Gresham College; he took orders, and became a Fellow of Eton College; and during the Civil War fled to Ireland. Unton rose at the Bar, became a member of Parliament, "aided the Parliamentarians during the Civil War and enjoyed the favour of Cromwell." And there was Browne's dear friend, Thomas Manwood, who had entered the Inner

Temple in 1611, and whose early death by drowning Browne bewails in the fourth eclogue of the *Shepherd's Pipe,*— an elegy somewhat fantastic but beautifully sincere, and, in one or two of its fundamental concepts, decidedly reminiscent of Beaumont's elegy written the year before on the death of the Countess of Rutland.

These are a few of the members of this Society whom Beaumont met whenever he visited the Inner Temple. It was such as they and their companions, many more of whom are mentioned in the *Inner Temple Records,* and described by Mr. Gordon Goodwin in his edition of Browne's *Poems,* who set forth, ordered, and furnished Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple;* and who, as gentlemen-masquers, sailed with him in the royal barge to Whitehall, and happily performed the masque before the King and Queen, the Princess Elizabeth, and the Count Palatine, on Saturday, the twentieth day of February 1613.

Beaumont's friends were Fletcher's; and Fletcher must have known Browne. It has always seemed strange to me that, when enumerating in his *Britannia's Pastorals* the pastoral poets of England,— half a dozen of them, his personal acquaintances,— Browne should have omitted Fletcher to whom he was deeply indebted for literary inspiration. Between 1610 and 1613 he had, in his *First Book of Britannia's Pastorals* (Song 1, end; Song 2, beginning), borrowed the story of Marina and the River-God, as regards not only the main incident but also much of the poetic phrase, from the *Faithfull Shepheardesse* — the scene in which Fletcher's God of the River rescues Amoret

and offers her his love. The borrowing is not at all a plagiarism, but an elaboration of the Amoret episode; and, as such, the imitation is indirect homage to the quondam pastoralist living close by in Southwark. I hesitate to enter upon quest of literary surmise. But some young lion of research might be pardoned if he should undertake to prove that the description of the shepherd Remond which Browne introduces into his first Song just before this borrowing from Fletcher's pastoral drama is homage to Fletcher, pure and direct:

> Remond, young Remond, that full well could sing,
> And tune his pipe at Pan's birth carolling:
> Who for his nimble leaping, sweetest layes,
> A lawrell garland wore on holidayes;
> In framing of whose hand dame Nature swore
> That never was his like nor could be more.[1]

Conjectural reconstruction of literary relationships is perilously seductive. But it is only fair to apprise the young lion of the delightful certainty that though the trail may run up a tree, it abounds in alluring scents. He will find that no sooner has Browne's Marina concluded the adventure borrowed from Fletcher than she falls in with Remond's younger companion, "blithe Doridon," who, in the *Second Book* of the *Pastorals,* written in 1614–15, swears fidelity to Remond —

> Entreats him then
> That he might be his partner, since no men
> Had cases liker; he with him would goe —
> Weepe when he wept and sigh when he did so;[2]

[1] *Brit. Past.,* I, 1, 476. [2] *Ibid.,* II, 2, 469.

and that, in the second Song of the *First Book*,[1] Doridon, who also is a poet, is described at a length not at all necessary to the narrative, and in terms that more than echo the description of the beauty of Hermaphroditus in the poem of that name which has been traditionally attributed to Beaumont. This Doridon is a genius:

> Upon this hill there sate a lovely swaine,
> As if that Nature thought it great disdaine
> That he should (so through her his genius told him)
> Take equall place with swaines, since she did hold him
> Her chiefest worke, and therefore thought it fit,
> That with inferiours he should never sit. . . .

He is "fairest of men"; when he pipes "the wood's sweet quiresters" join in consort—"A musicke that would ravish choisest eares." He is, as I have said, a poet,—

> And as when Plato did i' th' cradle thrive,
> Bees to his lips brought honey from their hive;
> So to this boy they came; I know not whether
> They brought, or from his lips did honey gather. . . .

He is also a master in the revels,

> His buskins (edg'd with silver) were of silke . . .
> Those buskins he had got and brought away
> For dancing best upon the revell day.

Browne, by the way, wrote the *Prefatory Address* to this Book of *Britannia's Pastorals*, June 18, 1613, only three months after Beaumont's Masque upon the

[1] Ll. 405-470.

" revel day " was acted; and the book was licensed for printing, the same year, November 15.

Returning to our young lion, he will, I fear me, exult (with lust of chase or laughter?) when in the third song of this book, he notes that Doridon, overhearing the love-colloquy of Remond and Fida, can find no other trope to describe their felicity than one drawn from Ovid, and from the so-called Beaumont poem of 1602, *Salmacis and Hermaphroditus,*—

> Sweet death they needs must have, who so unite
> That two distinct make one Hermaphrodite.[1]

Lured by such scents as these, our beast of prey may pounce — upon a shadow, or not? — when, having tracked the meandering Browne to the second song of the Second Book, he there hears him rehearse the names of

> What shepheards on the sea were seene
> To entertaine the Ocean's queene,—

the poets of England: Astrophel (Sidney), " the learned Shepheard of faire Hitching hill " (Chapman), all loved Draiton, Jonson, well-languag'd Daniel, Christopher Brooke, Davies of Hereford, and Wither,

> Many a skilfull swaine
> Whose equals Earth cannot produce againe,
> But leave the times and men that shall succeed them
> Enough to praise that age which so did breed them,—

and then, *without interim,* proceed:

[1] *Ibid.,* I, 3, 297–8.

Two of the quaintest swains that yet have beene
Failed their attendance on the Ocean's queene,
Remond and Doridon, whose haplesse fates
Late sever'd them from their more happy mates.[1]

Browne, who had dropped these companion shepherds of the "pastoral and the rural song" three songs back, now needs them to scour the forests for the vanished Fida of his fiction. If he had not needed them for the narrative here resumed, might they not have attended the Ocean's queen with the other poets of England,— all, but Sidney, his personal friends,— as Fletcher and Beaumont? This is precisely the way in which Masaccio, Ghirlandajo, and Rafael introduced into their frescoes the Tornabuoni and Medici of their time. We may leave the inquisitive to follow them to that realm where, forsaking mythical and pastoral romance,

Many weary dayes
They now had spent in unfrequented wayes.
About the rivers, vallies, holts, and crags,
Among the ozyers and the waving flags,
They merely pry, if any dens there be,
Where from the Sun might harbour crueltie:
Or if they could the bones of any spy,
Or torne by beasts, or humane tyranny.
They close inquiry made in caverns blind,
Yet what they look for would be death to find.
Right as a curious man that would descry,
Led by the trembling hand of Jealousy,
If his fair wife have wrong'd his bed or no,
Meeteth his torment if he find her so.[2]

[1] *Ibid.*, II, 2, 247–352.

[2] *Ibid.*, II, 2, 510–512.

I cannot, however, refrain from pointing the venturesome researcher,— with irony — may be not Mephistophelian, but merely pyrrhonic,— to the dramatic misfortunes of Bellario, Aspasia, and Evadne, and other heroines of the dramatized romances in which Beaumont and Fletcher's theatre of the Globe was indulging at the time. And I would ask him after he has read the sage advice of Remond to the disconsolate shepherd, some two hundred lines further down, to turn to Fletcher's poem of 1613 *Upon an Honest Man's Fortune,* and decide whether the poet-philosopher of the one is not very much of the same opinion as the shepherd-philosopher of the other.[1]

[1] Cf. especially *Brit. Past.,* II, 2, 706-732, with Fletcher's defiance of poverty and independence of criticism in his poem, *Upon an Honest Man's Fortune.*

CHAPTER X

AN INTERSECTING CIRCLE OF JOVIAL SORT

CHRISTOPHER BROOKE of Lincoln's Inn enters the circle of Beaumont's associates not only as the advocate to whom Beaumont's friends in Shakespeare's company of actors turn for counsel in an important suit at law, and as the encomiast of Shakespeare himself a year or two later:

> He that from Helicon sends many a rill,
> Whose nectared veines are drunk by thirsty men,[1]

but as one of the pastoralists of the Inns of Court. He was also a friend of Beaumont's older associates, Jonson, Drayton, and Davies of Hereford. From an unexpected quarter comes information of Brooke's intimacy with still others who at various points impinged upon Beaumont's career,— with Inigo Jones, for instance, who designed the machinery for Beaumont's *Masque,* and with Sir Henry Nevill, the father of the Sir Henry who, a few years later, supplied the publisher Walkley with the manuscript of Beaumont and Fletcher's *A King and No King.* When we let ourselves in upon the elder Sir Henry carousing at the Mitre with Brooke and Jones, and others known to Beaumont as members of the Mermaid, in a famous symposium held some time between 1608 and September 1611, we begin to feel that it was not by mere

[1] *The Ghost of Richard III,* I, viii (1614).

accident that the manuscript of *A King and No King* fell into the hands of the Nevill family. Sir Henry the elder, of Billingbear, Berkshire, was a relative of Sir Francis Bacon, and a friend of Davies of Hereford, and of Ben Jonson, who dedicated to Nevill about 1611 one of his most graceful epigrams; probably, also, of Francis Beaumont's brother John, who wrote a graceful tribute to the memory of one of the gentlewomen of the family, Mistress Elizabeth Nevill. This Sir Henry was an influential member of Parliament, a statesman, a courtier, and a diplomat, as well as a patron of poets. He came near being Secretary of the realm. It is his name that we find scribbled with those of Bacon and Shakespeare, about 1597, possibly by Davies of Hereford, the admirer of all three, over the cover of the *Northumbrian Manuscript* of "Mr. Ffrauncis Bacon's" essays and speeches. Sir Henry did not die till 1615, and it is more than likely that the play, *A King and No King,* which was acted about 1611, and of which his family held the manuscript, had his "approbation and patronage" as well as that of Sir Henry the younger "to the commendation of the authors"; and that both father and son knew Beaumont and Fletcher well.

The Mitre Inn, a common resort of hilarious Templars, still stands at the top of Mitre Court, a few yards back from the thoroughfare of Fleet Street.

The symposium to which I have referred is celebrated in a copy of macaronic Latin verses, entitled *Mr. Hoskins, his Convivium Philosophicum;*[1] and I

[1] In *Cal. State Papers* (*Dom.*), under Sept. 2, 1611, I find "Description by Ralph Colphab [Thomas Cariat] of Brasenose College, Oxford, of a philosophical feast the guests at which



FRANCIS BACON

From the portrait by Paul Van Somer in the National Portrait Gallery, London

may be pardoned if I quote from the contemporary translation by John Reynolds of New College, the opening stanzas, since one is set to wondering how many other of the jolly souls "convented," beside Brooke and Jones and Nevill, our Beaumont knew.—

Whosoever is contented
That a number be convented,
 Enough but not too many;
The *Miter* is the place decreed,
For witty jests and cleanly feed,
 The betterest of any.

There will come, though scarcely current,
Christopherus surnamèd *Torrent*
 And John yclepèd *Made;*
And Arthur *Meadow-pigmies'-foe*
To sup, his dinner will forgoe—
 Will come as soon as bade.

Sir Robert *Horse-lover* the while,
Ne let Sir Henry *count it vile*
 Will come with gentle speed;
And *Rabbit-tree-where-acorn-grows*
And John surnamèd *Little-hose*
 Will come if there be need.

And Richard *Pewter-Waster* best
And Henry *Twelve-month-good* at least
 And John *Hesperian* true.

were Chris Brook, John Donne," and others in exactly the order given below, save for one error. "In Latin Rhymes." Dr. A. Clark in his Aubrey's *Brief Lives,* II, 50–51, gives the Latin verses from an old commonplace book in Lincoln College Library, "authore Rodolpho Calsabro, Aeneacense"; but prefers the attribution of another old copy, owned by Mr. Madan of Brasenose, "per Johannem Hoskyns, London." The translation by Reynolds, who died in 1614, is also given by Dr. Clark.

If any be desiderated
He shall be amerciated
Forty-pence in issue.

Hugh the *Inferior-Germayne,*
Nor yet unlearnèd nor prophane
Inego *Ionicke-pillar.*
But yet the number is not righted:
If Coriate bee not invited,
The jeast will want a tiller.

In his edition of Aubrey's *Brief Lives,* Dr. Clark supplies the glossary to these punning names. *Torrent* is, of course, Brooke. Johannes *Factus,* or *Made,* is Brooke's chamber-fellow of Lincoln's Inn, John Donne; and Donne is the great friend and correspondent in well known epistles of Henry *Twelvemonth-good,* the Sir Henry Goodere, or Goodeere, who married Frances (Drayton's Panape), one of the daughters of "the first cherisher of Drayton's muse." *Ne-let* Sir Henry *count it vile* is the elder Nevill under cover of his family motto, *Ne vile velis.* Inigo Jones, *Ionicke-pillar* is even more thinly disguised in the Latin original as Ignatius *architectus.* Hugh Holland (the *Inferior-Germayne*) was of Beaumont's Mermaid Club, the writer — beside other poems — of commendatory verses for Jonson's *Sejanus* in 1605, and of the sonnet *Upon the Lines and Life* of that other frequenter of the Mermaid, "sweet Master Shakespeare." Holland's "great patronesse," by the way, was the wife of Sir Edward Coke of Beaumont's Inner Temple, whose daughter married Beaumont's kinsman, Sir John Villiers; and it was by the great Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, that Holland was in-

troduced to King James. Also, of the Mermaid in Beaumont's time was Tom Coryate, the "leggestretcher of Odcombe" without whose presence this Convivium Philosophicum would "want its tiller." Of the Mermaid, too, was Richard Martin (the *Pewter-waster*). He was fond of the drama; had organized a masque at the Middle Temple at the time of the Princess Elizabeth's marriage; and it is to him that Ben Jonson dedicates the folio of *The Poetaster* (1616). In 1618, as Recorder of London, he was the bosom friend of Brooke, Holland, and Hoskins: he died of just such a "symposiaque" as this, a few years later, and he lies in the Middle Temple. Last, comes the reputed author of these macaronic Latin verses of the Mitre, John Hoskins himself (surnamed *Little-hose*). He had been a freshman of the Middle Temple in the year when Beaumont was beginning at the Inner. He was an incomparable writer of drolleries, over which we may be sure that Beaumont many a time held his sides,— a wag whose "excellent witt gave him letters of commendacion to all ingeniose persons," a great friend of Beaumont's Jonson, and of Raleigh, Donne, Selden, Camden, and Daniel.

Of the participants in Serjeant Hoskins's *Convivium Philosophicum,* we find, then, that several were of those who came into personal contact with Beaumont, and that of the rest, nearly all moved in the field of his acquaintance. Concerning a few, Arthur *Meadow-pigmies'-foe* (Cranefield), Sir Robert *Horse-lover* (Phillips), *Rabbit-tree-where-acorn-grows* (Conyoke or Connock), and John *Hesperian* (West), I have no information pertinent to the subject.

CHAPTER XI

BEAUMONT AND SIR PHILIP SIDNEY'S DAUGHTER; RELATIONS WITH OTHER PERSONS OF NOTE

GLIMPSES of the more personal relations of Beaumont with the world of rank and fashion, and to some extent of his character, are vouchsafed us in the few non-dramatic verses that may with certainty be ascribed to him. Unfortunately for our purpose, most of those included in the *Poems,* "by Francis Beaumont, Gent.," issued by Blaiklock in 1640 and printed again in 1653, and among *The Golden Remains* "of those so much admired Dramatick Poets, Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gents.," in 1660, are, as I have already said, by other hands than his: some of them by his brother, Sir John, and by Donne, Jonson, Randolph, Shirley, and Waller. Of the juvenile amatory lyrics, addresses, and so-called sonnets in these collections, it is not likely that a single one is by him; for in an epistle to Sidney's daughter, the Countess of Rutland, written when he was evidently of mature years and reputation,— let us suppose, about 1611, Beaumont says:

> I would avoid the common beaten ways
> To women usèd, which are love or praise.
> As for the first, the little wit I have
> Is not yet grown so near unto the grave
> But that I can, by that dim fading light,
> Perceive of what or unto whom I write.

Let others, "well resolved to end their days With a loud laughter blown beyond the seas,"—let such

> Write love to you: I would not willingly
> Be pointed at in every company,
> As was that little tailor, who till death
> Was hot in love with Queen Elizabeth.
> And for the last, in all my idle days
> I never yet did living woman praise
> In prose or verse.

A sufficient disavowal, this, of the foolish love songs attributed to him by an uncritical posterity.

As for this "strange letter," as he denominates it, from which I have quoted, the sincere, as well as brusque, humour attests more than ordinary acquaintance with, and genuine admiration of, Elizabeth, the poetic and only child of Sir Philip Sidney. The Countess lived but twenty-five miles north-west of Charnwood, and in the same country of Leicestershire. One can see the towers from the heights above Grace-Dieu. The Beaumonts undoubtedly had been at Belvoir, time and again. "If I should sing your praises in my rhyme," says he to her of the "white soul" and "beautiful face,"

> I lose my ink, my paper and my time
> And nothing add to your o'erflowing store,
> And tell you nought, but what you knew before.
> Nor do the virtuous-minded (which I swear,
> Madam, I think you are) endure to hear
> Their own perfections into question brought,
> But stop their ears at them; for, if I thought
> You took a pride to have your virtues known,
> (Pardon me, madam) I should think them none,

Many a writer of the day agreed with Beaumont concerning Elizabeth Sidney,—"every word you speak is sweet and mild." She, said Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden, "was nothing inferior to her father in poesie"; she encouraged it in others. But her husband, Roger, fifth Earl of Rutland, though a lover of plays himself, does not appear to have favoured his Countess's patronage of literary men. He burst in upon her, one day when Ben Jonson was dining with her, and "accused her that she kept table to poets." Of her excellence Jonson bears witness in four poems. Most pleasantly in that Epistle included in his *The Forrest,* where speaking of his tribute of verse, he says:

With you, I know my off'ring will find grace:
For what a sinne 'gainst your great father's spirit,
Were it to think, that you should not inherit
His love unto the Muses, when his skill
Almost you have, or may have, when you will?
Wherein wise Nature you a dowrie gave,
Worth an estate treble to that you have.
Beauty, I know is good, and blood is more;
Riches thought most: but, Madame, think what store
The world hath seene, which all these had in trust,
And now lye lost in their forgotten dust.

And in an Epigram[1] *To the Honour'd —— Countesse of ——*, evidently sent to her during the absence of her husband on the continent, he compliments her conduct,—

Not only shunning by your act, to doe
Ought that is ill, but the suspition too,—

[1] *Underwoods,* XLVIII.

at a time when others are following vices and false pleasures. But "you," he says,

admit no company but good,
And when you want those friends, or neare in blood,
Or your allies, you make your bookes your friends,
And studie them unto the noblest ends,
Searching for knowledge, and to keepe your mind
The same it was inspired, rich, and refin'd.

Among other admirers of the Countess of Rutland was Sir Thomas Overbury, who, according to Ben Jonson, was "in love with her." Beaumont would have known the brilliant and ill-starred Overbury, of Compton Scorpion, who was not only an intimate of Jonson's, but a devoted admirer of their mutual friend, Sir Henry Nevill of Billingbear.

And if Beaumont was on terms of affectionate familiarity with Sidney's daughter, he could not but have known Sidney's sister, the Countess of Pembroke, as well, the idol of William Browne's epitaph, and of his old friend Drayton's eulogy, on the "Fair Shepherdess,"

To whom all shepherds dedicate their lays,
And on her altars offer up their bays.

"In her time Wilton house," says Aubrey, "was like a College; there were so many learned and ingeniose persons. She was the greatest patronesse of witt and learning of any lady in her time." And if Beaumont knew the mother, then, also, William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, the son, to whom his

PROPERTY OF

master, Jonson, dedicates in 1611, the tragedy of *Catiline,* prefaced, as we have already observed, by verses of Beaumont himself.

Whatever Rutland's objection may have been to his Countess's patronage of poets, we may be sure that that lady's attitude toward Beaumont and his literary friends was seconded by her husband's old friend the Earl of Southampton, with whom in earlier days Rutland used to pass away the time "in London merely in going to plaies every day." Southampton had remained a patron of Burbadge, Shakespeare, and the like. And when he died in 1624, we find not only Beaumont's acquaintance, Chapman, but Beaumont's brother, joining in the chorus of panegyric to his memory. "I keep that glory last which is the best," writes Sir John,

> The love of learning which he oft express'd
> In conversation, and respect to those
> Who had a name in arts, in verse, in prose.

Since Southampton was "a dear lover and cherisher as well of the lovers of poets as of the poets themselves" [1] we may figure not only the two Beaumonts but their beloved Countess participating in such discussion of noble themes,—if not in London, then at Belvoir Castle or Titchfield House or Grace-Dieu Priory. If at Belvoir, Leland, the traveler, helps us to the scene. The castle, he says "standyth on the very knape of an highe hille, stepe up eche way, partely by nature, partely by working of mennes handes, as it may evidently be perceived. Of the late dayes [1540],

[1] Thomas Nashe, *Dedication of The Life of Jack Wilton.*

the Erle of Rutland hath made it fairer than ever it was. It is straunge sighte to se be how many steppes of stone the way goith up from the village to the castel. In the castel be 2 faire gates, And its dungeon is a fair rounde tour now turnid to pleasure, as a place to walk yn, to se at the countery aboute, and raylid about the round [waull, and] a garden [plot] in the middle." [1] One sees Francis toiling up the "many steps," received by his Countess and the rest, and rejoicing with them in the view of the twenty odd family estates from the garden on the high tower.

Returning to Francis Beaumont's epistle to the Countess of Rutland, we observe that it concludes with a promise:

> But, if your brave thoughts, which I must respect
> Above your glorious titles, shall accept
> These harsh disorder'd lines, I shall ere long
> Dress up your virtues new, in a new song;
> Yet far from all base praise and flattery,
> Although I know what'er my verses be,
> They will like the most servile flattery shew,
> If I write truth, and make the subject you.

The opportunity for "the new song" came in a manner unexpected, and, alas, too soon. In August 1612, but a brief month or so after she had been freed by her husband's death from the misery of an unhappy marriage, she was herself suddenly carried off by some mysterious malady. According to a letter of Chamberlain to Sir R. Winwood, "Sir Walter Ral-

[1] *Itinerary*, Ed. L. T. Smith, Vol. I, 97.

eigh is slandered to have given her certaine Pills that despatch'd her." That, Sir Walter, even with the best intent in the world, could not have done in person, for he was in the Tower at the time. Perhaps the medicine referred to was one of those "excellent receipts" for which Raleigh and his half-brother, Adrian Gilbert, were famous. The chemist Gilbert was living in those days with the Countess of Rutland's aunt, at Wilton.

Three days after the death of the lady whom he so revered, Beaumont poured out his grief in verses justly praised as

> A Monument that will then lasting be
> When all her Marble is more dust than she.

That is what John Earle, writing after Beaumont's own death, some four years later, says of the *Elegy on the Death of the Virtuous Lady, Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland.* And so far as the elegy proper is concerned,— that is to say, the first half of the poem, ere it blazes into scathing indictment of the physicians who helped the Countess to her grave,— I fully agree with Earle. Here is poetry of the heart, pregnant with pathos, not only of the untimely event — she was but twenty-seven years old,— but of the unmerited misfortune that had darkened the brief chapter of her existence: her father's death while she was yet in infancy,—

> Ere thou knewest the use of tears
> Sorrow laid up against thou cam'st to years;

sorrow in her wedded life,—

As soon as thou couldst apprehend a grief,
There were enough to meet thee; and the chief
Blessing of women, marriage, was to thee
Nought but a sacrament of misery.

And then,

Why didst thou die so soon? Oh, pardon me!
I know it was the longest life to thee,
That e'er with modesty was call'd a span,
Since the Almighty left to strive with man.

In this threnody of wasted loveliness and innocence, we have our most definite revelation of Beaumont's personality as a man among men: his tenderness, his fervid friendship, his passionate reverence for spotless womanhood and the sacrament of holy marriage (Jonson has given us the facts about her loathsome husband); his admiration of the chivalric great — as of the hero whose life was ventured and generously lost at Zutphen "to save a land," his contempt for pedantic stupidity and professional ineptitude, his faith in the "everlasting" worth of poetic ideals, his realization of the vanity of human wishes and of the counterbalancing dignity, the cleasing poignancy, of human sorrow; his reluctant but profound submission to the decree of "the wise God of Nature"; his acceptance of the inexplicable irony of life and of the crowning mercy:

I will not hurt the peace which she should have
By looking longer in her quiet grave,—

the consummation that all his heroines of tortured

chastity, the Bellarios, Arethusas, Aspasias, Pantheas, Uranias, of his mimic world, devoutly desired. And as a revelation of his poetic temper, perhaps all the more for its accessory bitterness and rhetorical conceits, this elegy is as valuable a piece of documentary evidence as exists outside of Beaumont's dramatic productions. It displays not a few of the characteristics which distinguish him as a dramatist from Fletcher: his preference in the best of their joint-plays for serious poetic theme, his realist humour and bold satiric force, his quiverful of words and rhythmical sequence, his creative imagery, his lines of vivid, final spontaneity,—

> Sorrow can make a verse without a Muse;

and "Thou art gone,"—

> Gone like the day thou diedst upon, and we
> May call that back again as soon as thee.

In still another way the lines on the death of Sidney's daughter are instructive. Its noble tribute to Sidney's *Arcadia* is payment of a debt manifest in more thăn one of the dramas to which Beaumont had contributed. Of Sir Philip, Beaumont here writes:

> He left two children, who for virtue, wit,
> Beauty, were lov'd of all,—thee and his writ:
> Two was too few; yet death hath from us took
> Thee, a more faultless issue than his book,
> Which, now the only living thing we have
> From him, we'll see, shall never find a grave
> As thou hast done. Alas, would it might be
> That books their sexes had, as well as we,
> That we might see this married to the worth,
> And many poems like itself bring forth.

The *Arcadia* had already brought forth offspring: in prose, Greene's *Menaphon* and *Pandosto,* and Lodge's *Rosalynde;* in verse, Day's *Ile of Guls.* It had fathered, immediately, the subplot of Shakespeare's *King Lear,*— and, indirectly, portions of the *Winter's Tale,* and *As You Like It,* and of other Elizabethan plays.[1] Within the twelve months immediately preceding August 1612, it had inspired also, as we have already observed, Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge,* the finest scenes in which are Beaumont's dramatic adaptation of romantic characters and motives furnished by Sir Philip. And from that same "faultless issue," the *Arcadia,* virtue, art, and beauty, loved of all, had earlier still been drawn by Beaumont, certainly for *The Maides Tragedy,* and, perhaps, for *Philaster* as well.

The acquaintance with the Rutland family was continued after the death of Francis by his brother John, and his sister Elizabeth. The Nymph "of beauty most divine . . . whose admirèd vertues draw All harts to love her" in John's poem, *The Shepherdess,* is Lady Katharine Manners, daughter of Francis, sixth Earl of Rutland, and now the wife of George Villiers, Marquis of Buckingham; and the Shepherdess herself "who long had kept her flocks On stony Charnwood's dry and barren rocks," the country dame "For singing crowned, whence grew a world of fame Among the sheep cotes," is Elizabeth Beaumont of Grace-Dieu, back on a visit from her Seyliard home

[1] See Greg's *Pastoral Poetry and the Pastoral Drama,* and my former pupil, H. W. Hill's, *Sidney's Arcadia and the Elizabethan Drama.*

in Kent. She had wandered into the summer place of the Rutlands and Buckinghams near the Grace-Dieu priory —" watered with our silver brookes," and had been welcomed and had sung for them. And now John repays the courtesy with indirect and graceful compliment.

With the Villiers family, as I have earlier intimated, the Beaumonts were connected not only by acquaintance as county gentry but by ties of blood. Sir George Villiers, a Leicestershire squire, had married for his second wife, about 1589, Maria Beaumont, a relative of theirs, who had been brought up by their kinsmen of Coleorton Hall to the west of them on the other side of the ridge. It will be remembered that one of those Coleorton Beaumonts, Henry, was an executor of Judge Beaumont's will in 1598. The father of the Maria, or Mary, Beaumont whom Henry Beaumont nurtured as a waiting gentlewoman in his household, was his second cousin, Anthony Beaumont of Glenfield in Leicestershire. While Maria was living at the Hall, the old Knight, Sir George Villiers of Brooksby, recently widowed, visited his kinswoman, Eleanor Lewis, Henry's wife, at Coleorton, " found there," writes a contemporary, Arthur Wilson, " this young gentlewoman, allied, and yet a servant of the family," was fascinated by her graces and made her Lady Villiers. This Sir George Villiers was of an old and distinguished family. Leland mentions it first among the ten families of Leicestershire, " that be there most of reputation." [1] And he says " The chiefest house of the Villars at this time is at Brokesby in Leicestershire,

[1] *Itinerary*, Vol. I, 21. See also, below, Appendix, Table A.



GEORGE VILLIERS, FIRST DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, AND FAMILY
From the painting by Honthorst in the National Portrait Gallery

lower by four miles than Melton, on the higher ripe [bank] of Wreke river. There lie buried in the church divers of the Villars. This Villars [of 1540] is lord of Hoby hard-by, and of Coneham in Lincolnshire. . . . He is a man of but two hundred marks of land by the year." This "Villars" was the father of the Sir George who married Maria Beaumont. Brooksby, near Melton Mowbray, is only two or three hours' drive from Coleorton.

The children of this marriage, John, George, and Christopher, were but a few years younger than the young Beaumonts of Grace-Dieu; and there would naturally be some coming and going between the Villiers children of Brooksby and their Beaumont kin of Coleorton and Grace-dieu. George, the second son, born in 1592, through whom the fortunes of the family were achieved, was introduced to King James in August 1614. This youth of twenty-two had all the graces of the Beaumont as well as the Villiers blood. "He was of singularly prepossessing appearance," says Gardiner, "and was endowed not only with personal vigour, but with that readiness of speech which James delighted in." It was his mother, Maria, now the widowed Lady Villiers, who manœuvred the meeting. Her husband's estates had gone to the children of the first marriage: George was her favourite son and she staked everything upon his success. James took to him from the first; the same year he made him cupbearer; the next, Gentleman of the Bed-chamber, and knighted him and gave him a pension. We may imagine that Francis Beaumont and his brother John watched the promotion of their kinsman with keen

interest. But his phenomenal career was only then beginning. In 1616, a few months after Francis had died, Sir George Villiers was elevated to the peerage as Viscount Villiers. By 1617 this devoted "Steenie" of his "dear Dad and Gossop," King James, is Earl of Buckingham, and now,—that Somerset has fallen,—the most potent force in the kingdom; in 1618 he is Marquis, and in 1623, Duke,—and for some years past he has been enjoying an income of £15,000 a year from the lands and perquisites bestowed upon him. Meanwhile his brother, John, has, in 1617, married a great heiress, the daughter of Sir Edward Coke of Beaumont's Inner Temple, and in 1619 has become Viscount Purbeck; his mother, the intriguing Maria, has been created Countess of Buckingham, in her own right; in due time his younger brother, the stupid Christopher, is made Earl of Anglesey. And Buckingham takes thought not for his immediate family alone: In 1617 "Villiers' kinsman [Hen] Beaumont was to have the Bishopric of Worcester, but failed";[1] in 1622 his cousin, Sir Thomas Beaumont of Coleorton, the son of the Sir Henry[2] who cared for Villiers' mother in her indigence, is created Viscount Beaumont of Swords; and in 1626, John Beaumont of Grace-Dieu is dubbed knight-baronet.

In 1620, the Marquis of Buckingham had married Katharine Manners, the daughter and sole heiress of Francis, Earl of Rutland. It was a love match; and

[1] *Cal. State Papers, Domestic,* Chamberlain to Carleton, Jan. 4, 1617. The Villiers descent is given in Collins, *Peerage,* III, 762.

[2] Sir Henry had petitioned ineffectually for the revival of the viscounty at an earlier date. *Cal. St. Pa., Dom.,* Nov. 23, 1606; see, also, reference in 1614. See also, below, Appendix, Table A.

John Beaumont celebrated it with a glowing epithalamium, praying for the speedy birth of a son

Who may be worthy of his father's stile,
May answere to our hopes, and strictly may combine
The happy height of Villiers race with noble Rutland's line.

Soon afterwards and before 1623, John Beaumont's *Shepherdesse,* spoken of above, was written. Beside the Nymph, the Marchioness of Buckingham, those whom the poem describes as living in "our dales,"— and welcoming Elizabeth Beaumont,— are the father of the Marchioness, the Earl of Rutland, "his lady," Cicely (Tufton), the stepmother of Katharine Manners,— and

Another lady, in whose brest
True wisdom hath with bounty equal place,
As modesty with beauty in her face:
She found me singing Flora's native dowres
And made me sing before the heavenly pow'rs,
For which great favour, till my voice be done,
I sing of her, and her thrice noble son.

This other lady, so wise, and bounteous to John Beaumont, is the Countess of Buckingham, who when John and our Francis were boys, was poor cousin Maria of the Coleorton Beaumonts. To the Marquis of Buckingham, "her thrice-noble sonne," John writes many poetic addresses in later years: of the birth of a daughter, Mall, "this sweete armefull"; of the birth and death of his first son; of how in his "greatnesse," George Villiers did not forget him:

> You, onely you, have pow'r to make me dwell
> In sight of men, drawne from my silent cell;

and of how Villiers had won him the recognition of the King:

> Your favour first th' anointed head inclines
> To heare my rurall songs, and read my lines.

George Villiers, is "his patron and his friend." In writing to the great Marquis and Duke, John Beaumont never recalls the kinship; but in writing to the less distinguished brother, the Viscount Purbeck, he delicately alludes to it.

In the fortunes of the Vauxes of Harrowden, the Beaumonts would naturally have continued their interest. Anne, imprisoned after the Gunpowder Plot, was released at the end of six months. The family persisted in its adherence to the Catholic faith and politics. As late as Feb. 26, 1612, "Mrs. Vaux, Lord (Edward) Vaux's mother, is condemned to perpetual imprisonment, for refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance"; and we observe that on March 21, of the same year, "Lord Vaux is committed to the Fleet" for a like refusal.[1] Young Lord Vaux got out of the Fleet, in time married, and lived till 1661.

Others of kin or family connection,— and of his own age,— with whom Francis would be on terms of social intercourse or even intimacy during his prime, were his cousin, Robert Pierrepoint, who by 1601 was in Parliament as member for Nottingham, and in 1615 was High Sheriff of the shire; Henry Hastings, born

[1] *Calendar of State Papers* (Domestic), 1611–1617, under dates.

in 1586, who since 1604 had been fifth Earl of Huntingdon, and in May 1616 was to be of those appointed for the trial of the Earl and Countess of Somerset; Huntingdon's sister, Catherine (who was wife of Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield), and his brother, Edward, a captain in the navy, who the year after Beaumont's death made the voyage to Guiana under Sir Walter Raleigh; Huntingdon's cousin, and also Beaumont's kinsman, Sir Henry Hastings, of whom we have already heard as one of Father Gerard's converts (a first cousin of Mrs. Elizabeth Vaux, and husband of an Elizabeth Beaumont of Coleorton); Sir William Cavendish, of the Pierrepoint connection, a pupil of Hobbes, an intimate friend of James I, and a leader in the society of Court, who was knighted in 1609, and in 1612 strengthened his position greatly by marrying Christiana, daughter of Lord Bruce of Kinloss; and that other young Cavendish, Sir William of Welbeck, county Notts., who in 1611 was on his travels on the continent under the care of Sir Henry Wotton. With at least three of these scions of families allied to the Beaumonts, Francis had been associated, as I have already pointed out, by contemporaneity at the Inns of Court.

Neither the epistle to Elizabeth Sidney nor the elegy on her death was included by Blaiklock in his foolish book of so-called Beaumont poems. From the elegy on Lady Markham's death, in 1609, there included, we learn little of the poet's self — he had never seen the lady's face, and is merely rhetoricizing. From the elegy, also included by Blaiklock, "On the Death of the Lady Penelope Clifton," on October 26, 1613, al-

most as artificial, we learn no more of Beaumont's personality,— but we are led to conjecture some social acquaintance with the distinguished family of her father, Lord Rich, afterwards Earl of Warwick, and of her husband, Sir Gervase Clifton, who had been specially admitted to the Inner Temple in 1607; and the conjecture is confirmed by the perusal of lines "to the immortal memory of this fairest and most vertuous lady" included in the works of Sir John Beaumont. He writes as knowing Lady Penelope intimately,— the sound of her voice, the fairness of her face, her high perfections,— and as regretting that he had neglected to utter his affection in verse "while she had lived":

> We let our friends pass idly like our time
> Till they be gone, and then we see our crime.

These poems on Lady Penelope Clifton forge still another link between the Beaumonts and the Sidneys, for Penelope's mother, the Lady Penelope Devereux, daughter of Walter, first Earl of Essex, was Sidney's *innamorata,* the Stella to his Astrophel.

One may with safety extend the list of Beaumont's acquaintances among the gentry and nobility by crediting him with some of Fletcher's during the years in which the poets were living in close association; not only with Fletcher's family connections, the Bakers, Lennards, and Sackvilles of Kent, but with those to whom Fletcher dedicates, about 1609, the first quarto of his *Faithfull Shepheardesse:* Sir William Skipwith, for instance, Sir Walter Aston, and Sir Robert Townshend. Of these the first, esteemed for his "witty conceits," his "epigrams and poesies," was

admired and loved not only by Fletcher but by Beaumont's brother as well — to whom we owe an encomium evidently sincere:

. . . A comely body, and a beauteous mind;
A heart to love, a hand to give inclin'd;
A house as free and open as the ayre;
A tongue which joyes in language sweet and faire, . . .

and more of the kind. Sir William was a not distant neighbour of the Beaumonts, and was knighted, as we have seen, at the same time and place as Henry of Grace-Dieu; one may reasonably infer that his "house as free and open as the ayre" at Cotes in Leicestershire harboured Fletcher and the two Beaumonts on more than one occasion. Sir Walter Aston of Tixall in Staffordshire, the diplomat, of the Inner Temple since 1600, had been, since 1603,[1] the patron also of Francis Beaumont's life-long friend, Drayton. And that poet keeps up the intimacy for many years. Writing, after 1627 when Sir Walter, now Baron Aston of Forfar, was sent on embassy to Spain, he says of Lady Aston that "till here again I may her see, It will be winter all the year with me.". In 1609 Sir Walter is a "true lover of learning," in whom "as in a centre" Fletcher "takes rest," and whose "goodness to the Muses" is "able to make a work heroical." Of Sir Robert Townshend's relation to our dramatists we know nothing save that Fletcher says: "You love above my means to thank ye." He came of a family that is still illustrious, and for a quarter of a century he sat in Parliament.

[1] Elton, *Drayton*, p. 28.

Fletcher's closest friend, if we except Beaumont, seems to have been Charles Cotton of Beresford, Staffordshire, "a man of considerable fortune and high accomplishments," the son of Sir George Cotton of Hampshire. He owed his estates in Staffordshire, and in Derbyshire as well, to his marriage with the daughter of Sir John Stanhope. To him in 1639, as "the noble honourer of the dead author's works and memory," Richard Brome dedicates the quarto of Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas*. "Yours," he says, "is the worthy opinion you have of the author and his poems; neither can it easily be determined, whether your affection to them hath made you, by observing, more able to judge of them, than your ability to judge of them hath made you to affect them deservedly, not partially. . . . Your noble self (has) built him a more honourable monument in that fair opinion you have of him than any inscription subject to the wearing of time can be." To this Charles Cotton, his cousin, Sir Aston Cockayne, writes a letter in verse after the appearance of the first folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, 1647, speaking of Fletcher as "your friend and old companion" and reproaching him for not having taken the pains to set the printers right about what in that folio was Fletcher's, what Beaumont's, what Massinger's,—"I wish as free you had told the printers this as you did me." And it is apparently to Cotton that Cockayne is alluding when, upbraiding the publishers for not giving each of the authors his due, he says, "But how came I (you ask) so much to know? Fletcher's chief bosome-friend informed me so." Elsewhere Cockayne de-

scribes Fletcher and Massinger as "great friends"; but the "bosome-friend" mentioned above cannot be Massinger, for Massinger is one of those concerning whose authorship "the bosome-friend" gives information.

Cotton was a friend of Ben Jonson, Donne, and Selden, also. To him it is, as a critic, and not to his son, who was a poet, that Robert Herrick, born seven years after Beaumont, writes:

For brave comportment, wit without offence,
Words fully flowing, yet of influence,
Thou art that man of men, the man alone,
Worthy the publique admiration:
Who with thine owne eyes read'st what we doe write,
And giv'st our numbers euphonie and weight;
Tell'st when a verse springs high, how understood
To be, or not, borne of the royall-blood.
What state above, what symmetrie below,
Lives have, or sho'd have, thou the best can show.—[1]

And it is likely that Cotton did the same for Fletcher and Beaumont.

Of Cotton, Fletcher's and, therefore, Beaumont's friend, Lord Clarendon gives us explicit information: "He had all those qualities which in youth raise men to the reputation of being fine gentlemen: such a pleasantness and gaiety of humour, such a sweetness and gentleness of nature, and such a civility and delightfulness in conversation, that no man in the Court or out of it appeared a more accomplished person; all these extraordinary qualifications being supported by

[1] *Hesperides,* Aldine edition of *Herrick,* II, 136.

as extraordinary a clearness of courage, and fearlessness of spirit, of which he gave too often manifestation." In later life he was less happy in fortune and in disposition, "and gave his best friends cause to have wished that he had not lived so long." He passed through the Civil War and died at the end of Cromwell's protectorate, 1658.

And of Robert Herrick, we may say that he, too, was surely an acquaintance of our poets. He writes many poems to Ben Jonson. To their other friend, Selden, Fletcher's connection by the Baker alliance, and Beaumont's associate in the Inner Temple, he writes appreciatively:

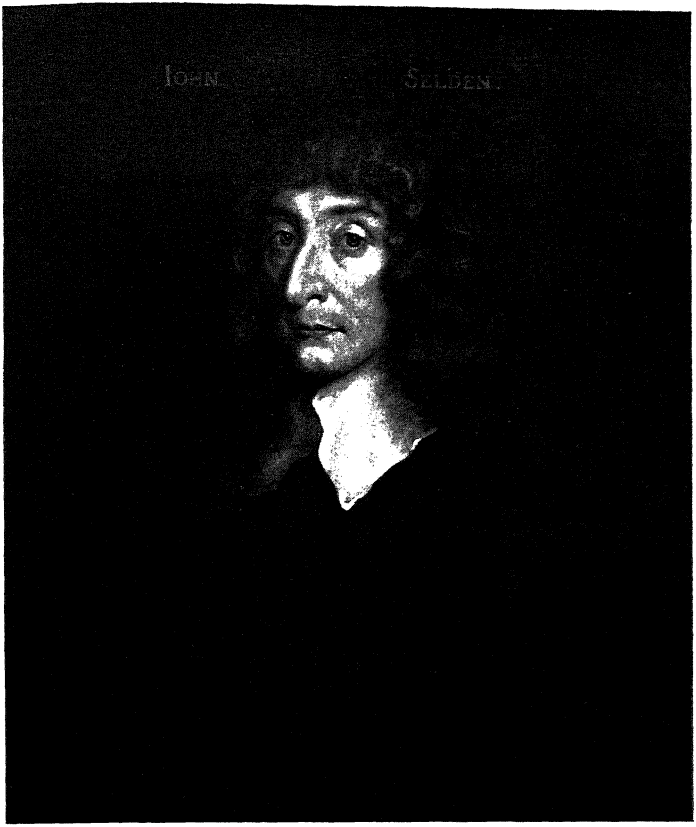
> Whose smile can make a poet, and your glance
> Dash all bad poems out of countenance.[1]

And of our dramatists themselves, he writes about the same time that he is writing to Selden, in his verses *To the Apparition of his Mistresse, calling him to Elizium*,—

> Amongst which glories, crown'd with sacred bayes
> And flatt'ring ivie, two recite their plaies —
> Beaumont and Fletcher, swans to whom all eares
> Listen while they, like syrens in their spheres,
> Sing their Evadne.[2]

The Bohemian life on the Bankside, such as it was, must have been brought to an end by Beaumont's marriage, about 1613. By that time Beaumont had writ-

[1] *Hesperides*, Aldine edition, *Herrick*, I, 301.
[2] *Op. cit.*, I, 329.



JOHN SELDEN

From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery, London

ten *The Woman-Hater, The Knight of the Burning Pestle, The Maske,* and several poems; Fletcher, *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* and three or four plays more; the two in partnership, at least five plays; and Fletcher had meanwhile collaborated with other dramatists in from eight to eleven plays which do not now concern us. As to the remaining dramas assigned to this period and attributed by various critics to Beaumont and Fletcher in joint-authorship, we shall later inquire. Suffice it for the present to say that I do not believe that the former had a hand in any of them, except *The Scornful Ladie.*

CHAPTER XII

BEAUMONT'S MARRIAGE AND DEATH; THE SURVIVING FAMILY

IN the 1653 edition of the "Poems; By Francis Beaumont, Gent." there is one, ordinarily regarded as of doubtful authorship, which, in default of information to the contrary, I am tempted to accept as his and to attach to it importance, as of biographical interest. It purports to bear his signature "Fran. Beaumont"; it bears for me the impress of his literary style. Writing before August 1612, to the Countess of Rutland, Beaumont had, as we have remarked, disclaimed ever having praised "living woman in prose or verse." In *The Examination of his Mistris' Perfections,* the poem of which I speak, the writer praises with all sincerity the woman of his love:

> Stand still, my happinesse; and, swelling heart,—
> No more! till I consider what thou art.

Like our first parents in Paradise who "thought it nothing if not understood," so the poet of his happiness —

> Though by thy bountious favour I be in
> A paradice, where I may freely taste
> Of all the vertuous pleasures which thou hast
> [I] wanting that knowledge, must, in all my blisse,

Erre with my parents, and aske what it is.
My faith saith 'tis not Heaven; and I dare swear,
If it be Hell, no pain of sence, is there;
Sure, 't is some pleasant place, where I may stay,
As I to Heaven go in the middle way.
Wert thou but faire, and no whit vertuous,
Thou wert no more to me but a faire house
Hanted with spirits, from which men do them blesse,
And no man will halfe furnishe to possesse:
Or, hadst thou worth wrapt in a rivell'd skin,
'T were inaccessible. Who durst go in
To find it out? for sooner would I go
To find a pearle cover'd with hills of snow;
'T were buried vertue, and thou mightst me move
To reverence the tombe, but not to love,—
No more than dotingly to cast mine eye
Upon the urne where Lucrece' ashes lye.
But thou art faire and sweet, and every good
That ever yet durst mixe with flesh and blood:
The Devill ne're saw in his fallen state
An object whereupon to ground his hate
So fit as thee; all living things but he
Love thee; how happy, then, must that man be
Whom from amongst all creatures thou dost take!
Is there a hope beyond it? can he make
A wish to change thee for? This is my blisse,
Let it run on now; I know what it is.

The poet of this tribute is not wooing, but worshiping the woman won; reverently striving to comprehend an ineffable joy. The poem is not of praises such as Beaumont in his epistle *Ad Comitissam Rutlundiae* contemns, praises "bestow'd at most need on a thirsty soul." The writer, here, purports to ex-

amine into his Mistress's perfections, but, like the author of the epistle to the Countess, he examines not at all,— he observes the reticence for which Beaumont there had given the reason,—

> Nor do the virtuous-minded (which I swear
> Madam, I think you are) endure to hear
> Their own perfections into question brought,
> But stop their ears at them.

When the lines of the *Examination* are set beside the undoubted poems of Beaumont, they appear, in rhetoric, metaphor, and sentiment, to be of a type with the two tributes to Lady Rutland; in vocabulary, rhyme, and run-on lines, also, to be of one font with them, and with the letter to Ben Jonson and the elegy to Lady Clifton. When the lines are set beside those of Beaumont's own phrasing in the dramas, one finds that in their brief compass they echo the metaphor of his Amintor, "my soul grows weary of her house,"— the hyperbole of his Philaster, "I will sooner trust the wind With feathers, or the troubled sea with pearl,"— the passionate ecstasy of his Arbaces, "Here I acknowledge thee, my hope . . . a happinesse as high as I could thinke . . . Paradice is there!" The tribute is a variant of those closing lines in *A King and No King,*

> I have a thousand joyes to tell you of,
> Which yet I dare not utter, till I pay
> My thankes to Heaven for um.

I date this poem, then 1612 or 1613, a year or two

after the play just mentioned and the epistle to Lady Rutland; and I imagine with some confidence that it was written by Beaumont for Ursula Isley, whom he married about this time.

Ursula's father, Henry Isley, belonged to a family of landed gentry which had been seated since the reign of Edward II in the parish of Sundridge, Kent. The manor came to them from the de Freminghams in 1412. In 1554 Sir Harry Isley and his son, William, who were prominent upholders of the reformed religion, had joined hands with the gallant young Sir Thomas Wyatt of Allington Castle — about seventeen miles from Sundridge — in the rebellion which he raised in protest against the proposed marriage of Queen Mary with Philip of Spain. At Blacksole Field, near Wrotham, half-way between Sundridge and Allington, the Isley contingent was met and routed by Sir Robert Southwell and Lord Abergavenny; and the vast Isley estates were confiscated. A considerable part was restored to William within a year or two. But he falling into debt had to sell the larger portion; and for the manor of Sundridge itself, he appears to have paid fee farm rent to the Crown.

By will, probably September 3, 1599, William's son, Henry, left all his "mannors, lands, tenements, and hereditaments, in the countie of Kent or else where within the realme of England, unto Jane my lovinge wief in fee simple, viz^t^ to her and her heires for ever, to the end and purpose that she maye doe sell or otherwise dispose at her discretion the same, or such parte or soe much thereof as to her shall seeme fitt, for the payement of all my just and true debts . . .

and also for the bringing up and preferment in marriage of Ursula and Una, the two daughters or children of her the said Jane, my lovinge wief." That the children were not, however, stepdaughters of Henry, is pointed out by Dyce, who quotes the manuscript of Vincent's *Leicester,* 1619: "Ursula, the daughter and coheir [evidently with Una] of Henry Isley." [1] In fact, Henry had named Ursula after his mother, the daughter of Nicholas Clifford.

It will be remembered that Beaumont's sister Elizabeth became the wife of a Thomas Seyliard of Kent. The Seyliards were one of the oldest families in the vicinity of Sundridge; and Thomas would be of Brasted, which adjoins Sundridge westward, a quarter of a mile from Sundridge Place and near the river Darenth; or of Delaware at the south of the parish; or of Gabriels about a mile from there and seven miles south of Sundridge; or of Chidingstone close by; or Boxley.[2] If Elizabeth was married before 1613, it is easy to surmise that during some visit to her, Beaumont was brought acquainted with Ursula Isley of Sundridge Place. If not, we may refer the acquaintance to sojournings with his friend, Fletcher, at Cranbrook or at the Kentish homes of Fletcher's stepsisters, or with their cousins, the Sackvilles.

We have no proof that Francis Beaumont wrote more than one drama after the Whitehall festivities of February 1613. Two plays in which he is supposed by some to have had a hand with Fletcher, *The Captaine* and *The Honest Man's Fortune,* were acted

[1] *Works of B. and F.*, I, li-lii.
[2] Hasted's *History of Kent* (1797), II, 433; III, 146, 154, 186.

during that year; but I find no trace of Francis in the latter and but slight possibility of it in the former. We must conclude that from 1613 he lived as a country gentleman. He would be much more likely to take up his abode at Sundridge, which, as we have seen, belonged to his wife and her sister, than at Grace-Dieu Manor; for that was occupied by John Beaumont who had four sons to provide for. It is, of course, barely possible that one of his father's properties in Leicestershire or Derby may have fallen to him,— Cottons, for instance, in the latter county, or that "Mannor House of Normanton, and a close ther called the Parke" mentioned in the Judge's will and in which house-room was given by him to a "servaunte . . . for the tearme of eleaven yeares" beginning 1598. But the probabilities all point to the manor house in Kent as the scene of Beaumont's closing years.[1]

Sundridge Place lies, as we know, just south of Chevening and west of Sevenoaks. The old manor house in which, we may presume, Beaumont and Ursula lived, and where his children were born, has long since disappeared. But the old church, just north of the Place, with its Early English and Perpendicular architecture still stands much as in their day. The old brass tablets to the Isleys of two centuries are there, and the altar-tomb of the John Isley and his wife who died a century before Beaumont was born. Near this memorial we may imagine that Beaumont

[1] For Sundridge and the Isleys, see Hasted's *Kent*, II, 513–521; III, 128–132, 143–145; and *Cal, S. P.* (*Dom.*) Jan. 23, Feb. 24, 1554.

and Ursula sat of a Sunday; and through this same picturesque graveyard, breathing peace, they would pass home again. Some days they would take the half-hour stroll across the forks of the Darenth, by Combebank in the chalk hills and through the woods, to Chevening House, and drink a cup with old Sampson Lennard and his son, Sir Henry, and Fletcher's stepsister Chrysogona (Grisogone), now Lord and Lady Dacre, and make merry with their seven youngsters; and, coming back by the Pilgrim's road that makes for the shrine of the "holy blissful martir," Beaumont would quote, from Speght's edition of Chaucer which had appeared but thirteen years before, something merry of the

> Well nyne and twenty in a companye,
> Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
> In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
> That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde.

Or sometimes they would tramp across to Squerries and fish in the Darenth for the bream of which Spenser had written; perhaps, visit their sister Seyliard that same evening.

Another summer day, Francis would ride the ten miles north toward Chislehurst (ashes of Napoleon *le petit!*), and turn aside to pay his compliments to the proprietor of Camden Place, Ben Jonson's friend the antiquary. But we may suppose that more gladly and frequently than to any other spot, this dramatist-turned-squire, and settled down for health and leisure, would head his horse for Knole; and, galloping the hills through Chipstead and Sevenoaks up to the old

church that crowns the height, would steady to a trot along the stately avenue of the Park amid its beeches and sycamores,— resting his eye on broad sweeps of pasture-land and distant groves, and thinking poetry, — to be greeted within one short half-hour from the time he left the Place, by that most hospitable nobleman of the day, the noblest patron of poetry and art, Richard Sackville, third Earl of Dorset. They would pace — these two lovers of Ben Jonson, and worshippers of the first dramatist-earl — the Great Hall, together, talking of plays, of the burning of the Globe while *Henry VIII* was on the boards, or of the opening of the new Blackfriars, or of Overbury's poisoning, and the scandalous marriage of Rochester and Lady Essex, or of Sir Henry Nevill's chances in the matter of the Secretaryship, or of Winwood's appointment, or of Raleigh's grievances, or of the new favourite, young Villiers of Brooksby, or of the long existing grievance of Beaumont's Catholic cousins, in and after 1614 all the more acute because of the hopes and fears thronging that other subject of discussion which doubtless would occupy a place in any conversation, the negotiations of Don Diego Sarmiento for a Spanish Marriage. Perhaps they would stretch their legs out to the fire before the old andirons that had once been Henry VIII's, and talk of the tragic romance of young William Seymour and Lady Arabella Stuart, the cousin alike of Robert Pierrepoint and his majesty, James I; or of the indictment and fall of Somerset. Or they would stroll to the chapel, and decipher the carvings of the Crucifixion which Mary, Queen of Scots, had given to the Earl's brother, now dead. Or the Earl

would point out some new portrait of that wonderful collection, then forming, of literary men in the dining-room, and Beaumont would pass judgment upon the presentment of some of his own contemporaries.

Then down the drive by which the sheep are browsing and the deer, like Agag delicately picking their way, and back to Sundridge of the Isleys, and to Ursula; maybe to an afternoon of lazy writing on scenes that Fletcher has called for — perhaps the posset-night of Sir Roger and Abigail for the beginning of *The Scornful Ladie.*

In 1614 or 1615, the poet's first child, a daughter, was born and was appropriately named after the two Elizabeths who had touched most closely upon his life. But the days of wedded happiness — "This is my blisse, Let it run on now!" — were brief. On March 6, 1616, he died, — only thirty-one years of age.[1]

The lines written to Lady Rutland, some five years before,

> What little wit I have
> Is not yet grown so near unto the grave,
> But that I can, by that dim fading light,
> Perceive of what, or unto whom I write,

may have been conceived merely in humorous self-depreciation. But when we couple them with the epitaph written by John of Grace-Dieu "upon my deare brother, Francis Beaumont," —

[1] Jonson's statement to Drummond "ere he was thirty years of age" is incorrect, or was misreported.

On Death, thy murd'rer, this revenge I take:
I slight his terrour, and just question make,
Which of us two the best precedence have—
Mine to this wretched world, thine to the grave.
Thou shouldst have followed me, but Death to blame
Miscounted yeeres, and measur'd age by fame:
So dearely hast thou bought thy precious lines;
Their praise grew swiftly, so thy life declines.
Thy Muse, the hearer's queene, the reader's love,
All eares, all hearts (but Death's), could please and move;—

when we couple the dramatist's own words of his "wit not yet grown so near unto the grave" with these of his brother which I have italicized, and reflect that for the last three years Francis seems to have written almost nothing, we are moved to conjecture that his early death was not unconnected with an excessive devotion to his art, and that his health had been for some time failing. As Darley long ago pointed out,[1] the lines of Bishop Corbet "on Mr. Francis Beaumont (then newly dead)" may intend more than a poetical conceit; and they would confirm the probability suggested above.

He that hath such acuteness and such wit,
As would ask ten good heads to husband it;
He that can write so well, that no man dare
Refuse it for the best, let him beware:
Beaumont is dead; *by whose sole death appears,*
Wit's a disease consumes men in few years.—

And this conjecture is borne out by the portrait of the weary Beaumont that now hangs in Nuneham.

[1] *Introduction to The Works of B. and F.*, ed. 1866, I, xviii.

Three days after his death the dramatist was buried in that part of Westminster Abbey which, since Spenser was laid there to the left of Chaucer's empty grave, had come to be regarded as the Poets' Corner. Beaumont lies to the right of Chaucer's gray marble on the east side of the South Transept in front of St. Benedict's chapel. In what honour he was held we gather from the consideration that, of poets, only Chaucer and Spenser had preceded him to a resting place in the Abbey; and that of his contemporaries, only four writers of verse followed him: his brother, Sir John, who died some eleven years later, and lies beside him; his old friend, Michael Drayton, in 1631; Hugh Holland, in 1633; and that friend of all four, Ben Jonson, in 1637. On the "learned" or "historical" side of the transept, across the way from the poets, lie also only three of Beaumont's generation: Casaubon the philologist, Hakluyt the voyager, and Ben Jonson's master and benefactor —"most reverend head, to whom I owe All that I am in acts, all that I know,"— Camden the antiquary. "In the poetical quarter," writes Addison, a hundred years later, "I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets." Of the former category is Beaumont; of the latter, the alabaster bust of Drayton whose body lies under the north wall of the nave, and the monument to Jonson, who, having no one rich enough to "lay out funeral charges upon him," stands, in accordance with his own desire, on his "eighteen inches of square ground" under a paving-stone in the north aisle of the nave,— and the figure of their associate, Shakespeare, who,

though there was much talk of transporting his body from Stratford in the year of his death and Beaumont's, did not, even in "preposterous" effigy, join his compeers of the Poets' Corner till more than a century had elapsed. Upon Beaumont's grave Dryden's lofty pile encroaches. Above the grave rises the bust of Longfellow; and not far from Beaumont, Tennyson and Browning were lately laid to rest.

The verses, *On the Tombs in Westminster,* attributed to our poet-dramatist, are of doubtful authorship, but in diction and turn of thought they are paralleled by more than one of the poems which we have found to be his: —

> Mortality, behold, and feare,
> What a change of flesh is here!
> Thinke how many royall bones
> Sleep within these heap of stones:
> Here they lye, had realmes and lands,
> Who now want strength to stir their hands;
> Where from their pulpits, seal'd with dust,
> They preach "In greatnesse is not trust."
> Here's an acre sown, indeed,
> With the richest, royall'st seed
> That the earth did e're suck in
> Since the first man dy'd for sin:
> Here the bones of birth have cry'd,
> "Though gods they were, as men they dy'd";
> Here are sands, ignoble things,
> Dropt from the ruin'd sides of kings.
> Here's a world of pomp and state
> Buried in dust, once dead by fate.

If the lines are not by Francis, they still preach the

calm, deterministic spirit of his poems and his tragedies; and they are worthy of him.

Beaumont's surviving brother of Grace-Dieu continued for many years to write epistolary, panegyric, and religious poems, which won increasing favour among scholars and at Court. They were collected and published by his son, in 1629. Of his *Battle of Bosworth Field,* which contains some genuinely poetic passages, I have already spoken. In his lines to James I *Concerning the True Forme of English Poetry,* composed probably the year of Francis' death, or the year after, he desiderates regularity of rhyme,

> Pure phrase, fit epithets, a sober care
> Of metaphors, descriptions cleare, yet rare,
> Similitudes contracted, smooth and round,
> Not vex't by learning, but with nature crown'd,—

strong and unaffected language, and noble subject. They made an impression upon his contemporaries in verse; and, though he was but a minor poet, he has come to be recognized as one of the "first refiners" of the rhyming couplet,—a forerunner, in the limpid style, of Waller, Denham, and Cowley. His translations from Horace, Juvenal, Persius, and Prudentius are done with spirit. His later poems set him before us an eminently pious soul, kindly, courtly, and cultivated. His greatest work, the *Crowne of Thornes,* in eight books, is lost. It was evidently dedicated to Shakespeare's Earl of Southampton, for in his elegy on the Earl, 1624, he says:

> Shall ever I forget with what delight
> He on my simple lines would cast his sight?

His onely mem'ry my poore worke adornes,
He is a father to my crowne of thornes:
Now since his death how can I ever looke
Without some tears, upon that orphan booke?

That this poem was printed we gather also from the elegy of Thomas Hawkins upon Sir John.

I have already said that John was raised by Charles I, undoubtedly through the influence of the Duke of Buckingham, to the baronetcy in 1626. He died only a year or two later,[1] and was lamented in verse by his sons, and by poets and scholars of the day. On the appearance of his poetical remains, Jonson wrote "This booke will live; it hath a genius," and "I confesse a Beaumont's booke to be The bound and frontire of our poetrie." And Drayton —

There is no splendour, which our pens can give
By our most labour'd lines, can make thee live
Like to thine owne.

In the commendatory poems, his friend, Thomas Nevill,[2] praises his goodness, his knowledge and his art. Sir Thomas Hawkins of Nash Court, Kent,— connected through Hugh Holland and Edmund Bolton with the circle of Sir John's acquaintances,— emphasizes the modesty, regularity, moral and religious devotion no less of his life than of his poetry. His sons rejoice that "His draughts no sensuall

[1] According to the Register of burials in Westminster Abbey, 1627; but some authorities say 1628. See Dyce, I, xxi; Chalmer's *English Poets,* VI, 3, and Grosart's edition of his poems.

[2] This is certainly not the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, as Grosart opines,— for the simple reason that the Master died thirteen years before Sir John.

waters ever stain'd." His brother-in-law, George Fortescue of Leicestershire, and others swell the chorus of affection. He was, says the historian of Leicestershire who knew him well,— William Burton, the brother of that rector of Segrave, near by, who wrote the *Anatomy of Melancholy*,— he was "a gentleman of great learning, gravity, and worthiness."

Sir John was succeeded at Grace-Dieu by John, his oldest son, who fought during the Civil War for King Charles, and fell at the siege of Gloucester, in 1644. Other sons were Gervase, who died in childhood, Francis, who became a Jesuit, and Thomas, who succeeded in 1644 to the family title and estates. The Manor of Grace-Dieu passed finally to the Philips family of Garendon Park, about four miles from Grace-Dieu and half a mile from old Judge Beaumont's property of Sheepshead. The founder of this family at Garendon in 1682 was Sir Ambrose Philips,[1] the father of the Ambrose who wrote the *Pastorals* and *The Distrest Mother*. From the Philipses the present owners of Garendon and Grace-Dieu, the Phillipps de Lisles, inherited. The old house is no longer standing. But below the new Manor may be seen the ruins of the Nunnery from which the Master of the Rolls almost four centuries ago evicted Catherine Ekesildena and her sister-nuns. It is interesting to note that the name de Lisle, or Lisle, is but a variant of that of Francis Beaumont's wife Isley (de Insula); and that the present family came from the Isle of Wight and Kent, Ursula Isley's native county. I have not, however, yet been able to establish any direct con-

[1] Nichols, *Coll. Hist., Leic.,-Bibl. Top. Britt.*, VIII, 1329, 1341.

nection between the Sundridge Isleys and the Phillipps de Lisles who came into the Grace-Dieu estates in 1777.

The sister of the Beaumonts, Elizabeth, was about twenty-four years old at the time of Francis' marriage to Ursula Isley of Kent. The date of her wedding to Thomas Seyliard does not appear; but before 1619 she was settled in the same county, and within a few miles of Chevening, Sundridge, and Knole. Of the events of her subsequent life we know nothing. That she cultivated poetry and the poets, however, may be inferred, from various passages in Drayton's *Muses Elizium*. In the third, fourth, and eighth *Nimphalls*, written as late as 1630, the old poet introduces among his nymphs,— singing in the "Poets Paradice," which, I surmise, was terrestrially Knole Park,— the same "Mirtilla" who in his eighth Eglog of 1606 was "sister to those hopeful boys, . . . Thyrsis and sweet Palmeo." Only a year before the appearance of these *Nimphalls* Drayton composed for the publication of her elder brother's poems, a lament "To the deare Remembrance of his Noble Friend, Sir John Beaumont, Baronet." Mirtilla had outlived both Thyrsis and Palmeo, but not the affection of their life-long admirer and boon companion.

The widow of the dramatist bore a child a few months after the father's death, and named her Frances. In 1619 Ursula administered her husband's estate;[1] and she probably continued to live with her children at the family seat in Sundridge. The elder daughter, Elizabeth, was married to "a Scotch colo-

[1] A. B. Grosart, in *D.N.B.*, art. *Francis Beaumont.*

nel" and was living in Scotland as late as 1682. Frances was never married. She seems to have cherished her father's fame as her richest possession. It was, indeed, probably her only possession, save a packet of his poems in manuscript which, we are told, she carried with her to Ireland, but unfortunately "they were lost at sea"[1] on her return. In 1682 she was "resident in the family of the Duke of Ormonde," then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.[2] She appears to have attended the high-spirited and capable Duchess, or other ladies of the Butler family, at the Castle in Dublin, or the family seat in Kilkenny, as companion. Under the protection of that loyal cavalier and Christian statesman, James, Duke of Ormonde, whose prayer was ever "for the relieving and delivering the poor, the innocent, and the oppressed,"[3] she must have known happiness, for at any rate a few years. She was retired by the Duke, apparently after the death of the Duchess, in 1684, on a pension of one hundred pounds a year; and this competence we learn that she still enjoyed in 1700, when at the age of eighty-four she was living in Leicestershire,—let us hope in her father's old home of Grace-Dieu. She may have survived to see the accession of Queen Anne. We know merely that she died before 1711. Her life bridges the space from the day of her father, Shakespeare's younger contemporary, to that of her father's encomiast, Dryden, and further still to that of Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and Addison; and we are

[1] Preface to *B. and F.'s Works*, ed. 1711, p. 1.

[2] Dyce, Vol. I, p. 211, from *MS., Vincent's Leicester*, 1683.

[3] James Wills, *Lives of Illustrious and Distinguished Irishmen*, 1841, Vol. III, Pt. ii, p. 244.

thus helped to realize that in the arithmetic of generations Beaumont's times and thought are after all not so far removed from our own. Two more such spans of human existence would link his day with that of Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne.

CHAPTER XIII

THE PERSONALITY, AND THE CONTEMPORARY REPUTATION OF BEAUMONT

OUR poet's contemporaries saw him, not as one of my scholarly friends, Professor Herford, judging apparently from the crude engraving of 1711,[1] or from that of 1812, sees him, "of heavy and uninteresting features," but as Swinburne saw him, probably in Robinson's engraving of 1840, "handsome and significant in feature and expression alike . . . with clear thoughtful eyes, full arched brows, and strong aquiline nose with a little cleft at the tip; a grave and beautiful mouth, with full and finely-curved lips; the form of face a long pure oval, and the imperial head, with its 'fair large front' and clustering hair, set firm and carried high with an aspect at once of quiet command and kingly observation";[2] as we see him to-day in the soft and speaking photogravure[3] recently made from the portrait at Knole Park or in the reproduction of 1911[4] of the portrait which belongs to the Rt. Hon. Lewis Harcourt at Nuneham,—a courtly gentleman of noble

[1] From the portrait at Knole Park.
[2] *Encyc. Brit., sub nomine.*
[3] By Cockerell, in the *Variorum Edition of B. and F.'s Works*, Vol. I, 1904. See Frontispiece to this volume.
[4] *Historical Portraits*, Vol. II, 1600–1700, Oxford, 1911.

mien, of countenance dignified, beautiful, and mobile, and of dreamy eyes somewhat saddened as by physical suffering, or by sympathetic pondering on the mystery of life. The original at Knole was already there, in the time of Lionel, seventh Earl of Dorset, 1711, and in default of information to the contrary we may conclude that it has always been in the possession of the Sackville family, and was painted for Beaumont's contemporary, and I have ventured to surmise friend as well as neighbour, Richard, third Earl of Dorset,— who had succeeded to the earldom in 1609 — about the year of *Philaster*. I have already shown that the Sackvilles were connected with the Fletchers by marriage. They were also patrons of Beaumont's friends, Jonson and Drayton. While the third Earl was still living, poor old Ben writes to son, Edward Sackville, a grateful epistle for succouring his necessities. And to the same Edward, as fourth Earl,[1] Drayton dedicated, 1630, the *Nimphalls* of his *Muses Elizium,* and to his Countess, Mary, the *Divine Poems,* published therewith. If, as others have conjectured, the Earl is himself the Dorilus of the *Nimphalls,* the exquisite *Description of Elizium* which precedes, may be, after the fashion of the poets and painters of the Renaissance, an idealized picture of Knole Park, where Drayton probably had been received:

A Paradice on earth is found,
 Though farre from vulgar sight,
Which, with those pleasures doth abound,
 That it Elizium hight,—

[1] Not to the third Earl, Richard, as Cyril Brett, *Drayton's Minor Poems,* p. xix, has it.

of its groves of stately trees, its merle and mavis, its daisies damasking the green, its spreading vines upon the "cleeves," its ripening fruits:

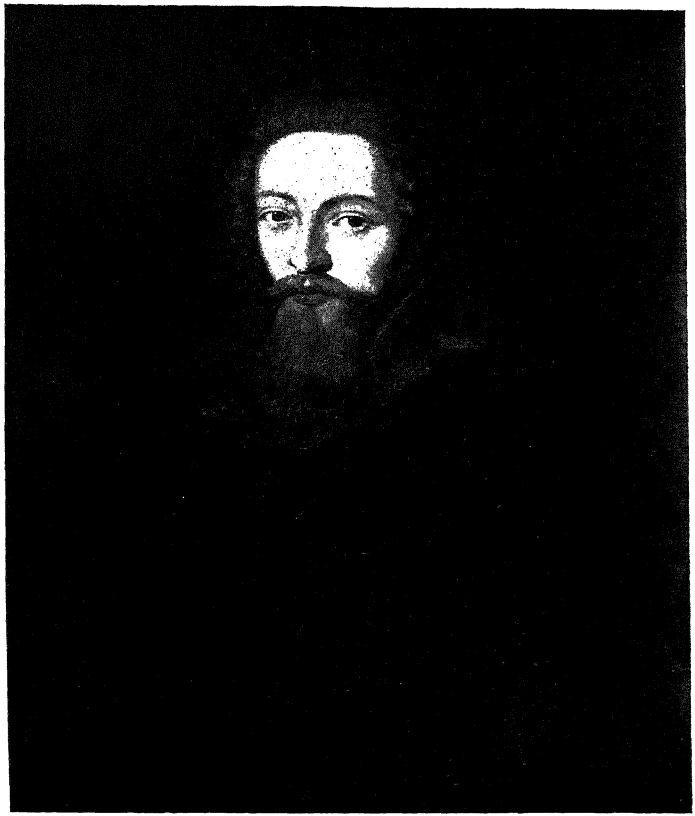
> The Poets Paradice this is,
> To which but few can come;
> The Muses onely bower of blisse,
> Their Deare Elizium.

It was the widow of the third Earl, Anne (Clifford), Countess of Dorset and, afterwards, of Pembroke and Montgomery,[1] who erected the monument to Drayton in the Poets' Corner. That Beaumont was acquainted with this family of poets and patrons of art is, therefore, in every way more than probable; and there is a poetic pleasure in the reflection that the family still retains, in the house which Beaumont probably often visited, this noble presentment of the dramatist.

The portrait at Nuneham, which I have mentioned above, is not so life-like as that at Knole: it lacks the shading. But it is for us most expressive: it is that of an older man, spade-bearded, of broader brow, higher cheek-bones, and face falling away toward the chin; of the same magnanimity and grace, but with eyes more almond-shaped and sensitive, and eloquent of illness. It is the likeness of Beaumont approaching the portals of death.

Of the personality of Beaumont we have already had glimpses through the window of his non-dramatic

[1] Clark's *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, II, 175, 239. Not Mary (Curzon), the wife of the fourth Earl, as Professor Elton, *Drayton* (1895), p. 45, has it.



By permission of Mr. Lewis Harcourt.

THE BEAUMONT

OF THE

poems. His letter to Ben Jonson has revealed him chafing in enforced exile from London, amusedly tolerant of the "standing family-jests" of country gentlemen, tired of "water mixed with claret-lees" "with one draught" of which "man's invention fades," and yearning for the Mermaid wine of poetic converse, "nimble, and full of subtle flame." Other verses to Jonson and to Fletcher express his scorn of "the wild applause of common people," his confidence in sympathetic genius and Time as the only arbiters of literary worth. In still other poems, lyric, epistolary, and elegiac, we have savoured the tang of his humour, — unsophisticated, somewhat ammoniac; and from them have caught his habit of emotional utterance, frank and sincere, whether in admiration, love, or indignation. We have grown acquainted with his reverence for womanly purity; with his religion of suffering, his recognition of mortal pathos, irony, futility, and yet of inscrutable purpose and control, and of the countervailing serenity that awaits us in the grave. An amusing side-light is thrown upon his character by Jonson who told Drummond of Hawthornden, that "Francis Beaumont loved too much himself and his own verses." We are glad to know that a man of Jonson's well-attested self-esteem encountered in Beaumont an arrogance and a consciousness of poetic superiority; that even this "great lover and praiser of himself, contemner and scorner of others," for whom Spenser's stanzas were not pleasing, nor his matter, and "Shakespeare wanted art," — that even this great brow-beater of his contemporaries in literature, recognized in our poet a self-esteem which even

he could not bully out of him. But we must not be harsh in our judgment of Drummond's Ben Jonson, for though he "was given rather to lose a friend than a jest and was jealous of every word and action of those about him," this is not the Ben who some seven years earlier had written "How I do love thee, Beaumont, and thy Muse"; this is Ben as Drummond saw him in 1619 — Ben talking "especially after drink which is one of the elements in which he liveth." That Beaumont's affection and geniality of intercourse were reciprocated not only by Jonson, but by others, we learn from lines written to, or of, him by men of worth.

His judgment as a critic was recognized by his contemporaries, as well as the poetic brilliance of the dramas which he was creating under their eyes. His language, too, was praised for its distinction while he was yet living. In the manuscript outline of the *Hypercritica,* which appears to have been filled in at various times between 1602 and 1616, Bolton says: "the books out of which wee gather the most warrantable English are not many to my remembrance. . . . But among the cheife, or rather the cheife, are in my opinion these: Sir Thomas Moore's works; . . . George Chapman's first seaven books of Iliades; Samuell Danyell; Michael Drayton his Heroicall Epistles of England; Marlowe his excellent fragment of Hero and Leander; Shakespeare, Mr. Francis Beamont, and innumerable other writers for the stage,— and [they] presse tenderly to be used in this Argument; Southwell, Parsons, and some few other of that sort." In the final version of the *Hypercritica,* prepared be-

tween 1616 and 1618,[1] Bolton omits the later dramatists altogether;[2] but that is not to be construed by way of discrimination against Shakespeare and Beaumont. There is no doubt that Bolton knew the Beaumonts personally, and appreciated their worth, and as early as 1610; — for to his *Elements of Armories* of that year, he prefixes a "Letter to the Author, from the learned young gentleman, I. B., of Grace-Dieu in the County of Leicestershire, Esquier,"[3] who highly compliments the invention, judicial method, and taste displayed in the *Elements,* and returns the manuscript with promise of his patronage.

Further information of the esteem in which Francis was held, is afforded by the eulogies, direct or indirect, written soon after his death by those who were near enough to him in years to have known him, or to assess his worth untrammeled by the critical consensus of a generation that knew him not. The tender tributes of his brother and of his contemporary, Dr. Corbet, successively Bishop of Oxford, and of Norwich, have already been quoted. A so-called "sonnet," signed I. F., included in an Harleian manuscript between two poems undoubtedly by Fletcher, may not have been intended for the dead poet; but I agree with Dyce, who first printed it,[4] that it seems "very like Fletcher's epicede on his beloved associate": —

[1] After the appearance of Montague's edition of King James's *Works,* and before the execution of Raleigh.

[2] Save for non-dramatic productions such as Ben Jonson's *Epigrams,* etc.

[3] Grosart, *D.N.B.,* art, *Sir John Beaumont,* and *Sir J. B.'s Poems,* xxxvi.

[4] *B. and F.,* Vol. I, lii.

Come, sorrow, come! bring all thy cries,
All thy laments, and all thy weeping eyes!
Burn out, you living monuments of woe!
Sad sullen griefs, now rise and overflow!
Virtue is dead;
O cruel fate!
All youth is fled;
All our laments too late.

Oh, noble youth, to thy ne'er-dying name,
Oh, happy youth, to thy still-growing fame,
To thy long peace in earth, this sacred knell
Our last loves ring — farewell, farewell, farewell!
Go, happy soul, to thy eternal birth!
And press his body lightly, gentle Earth!

What the young readers of contemporary poetry at the universities thought of him is nowhere better expressed than in the lines written immediately after the poet's death by the fifteen- or sixteen-year-old John Earle; — he who was later Fellow of Merton and in turn Bishop of Worcester, and of Salisbury. The ardent lad is gazing in person or imagination on the new-filled tomb in the Poets' Corner, when he writes:

Beaumont lyes here; and where now shall we have
A Muse like his, to sigh upon his grave?
Ah, none to weepe this with a worthy teare,
But he that cannot, Beaumont that lies here.
Who now shall pay thy Tombe with such a Verse
As thou that Ladies didst, faire Rutlands Herse?
A Monument that will then lasting be,
When all her Marble is more dust than she.
In thee all 's lost: a sudden dearth and want

Hath seiz'd on Wit, good Epitaphs are scant;
We dare not write thy Elegie, whilst each feares
He nere shall match that coppy of thy teares.
Scarce in an Age a Poet,— and yet he
Scarce lives the third part of his age to see,
But quickly taken off, and only known,
Is in a minute shut as soone as showne. . . .

Why should Nature take such pains to perfect that which ere perfected she shall destroy? —

Beaumont dies young, so Sidney died before;
There was not Poetry he could live to, more:
He could not grow up higher; I scarce know
If th' art it self unto that pitch could grow,
Were 't not in thee that hadst arriv'd the hight
Of all that wit could reach, or Nature might . . .

The elegist likens Beaumont to Menander,

Whose few sententious fragments show more worth
Than all the Poets Athens ere brought forth;
And I am sorry I have lost those houres
On them, whose quicknesse comes far short of ours,
And dwelt not more on thee, whose every Page
May be a patterne to their Scene and Stage.
I will not yeeld thy Workes so mean a Prayse,—
More pure, more chaste, more sainted than are Playes,
Nor with that dull supinenesse to be read,
To passe a fire, or laugh an houre in bed. . . .
Why should not Beaumont in the Morning please,
As well as Plautus, Aristophanes?
Who, if my Pen may as my thoughts be free,
Were scurrill Wits and Buffons both to Thee. . .
Yet these are Wits, because they 'r old, and now,

Being Greeke and Latine, they are Learning too:
But those their owne Times were content t' allow
A thriftier fame, and thine is lowest now.
But thou shall live, and, when thy Name is growne
Six Ages older, shall be better knowne;
When thou 'rt of Chaucers standing in the Tombe,
Thou shall not share, but take up all his roome.[1]

A panegyric liberal in the superlatives of youth but, in view of passages to be quoted elsewhere, one of the sanest as well as earliest appreciations of Beaumont's distinctive quality as a dramatist; an appreciation such as the historian might expect from a collegian who, a dozen years later, was not only one of the most genial and refined scholars of his generation but, perhaps, the most accurate observer and epitomist of the familiar types and minor morals of his day,— a writer who in 1628 is still championing the cause of contemporary poetry. In his characterization of the Vulgar-Spirited Man "that is taken only with broad and obscene wit, and hisses anything too deep for him; that cries, Chaucer for his money above all our English poets, because the voice has gone so, and he has read none," the Earle of the *Microcosmographie* is but repeating the censure of his elegy on Beaumont in 1616.

About 1620, we find a contemporary of altogether different class from that of the university student acknowledging the fame of Beaumont, the Thames waterman, John Taylor. This self-advertising tramp and

[1] Revised by Earle for the *Commendatory Verses*, Folio 1647 but I have retained some of the readings of the 1640 copy included in Beaumont's *Poems*.

rollicking scribbler mentions him in *The Praise of Hemp-seed* with Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, and others, as of those who, "in paper-immortality, Doe live in spight of death, and cannot die." And not far separated from Taylor's testimonial in point of time is William Basse's prediction of a prouder immortality. Basse who was but two years older than Beaumont, and, as we have seen, was one of the pastoral group with which Beaumont's career was associated, is writing of "Mr. William Shakespeare" who had died six weeks after Beaumont,—and he thus apostrophizes the Westminster poets of the Corner:

Renownèd Spencer, lye a thought more nye
To learnèd Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lye
A little neerer Spencer, to make roome
For Shakespeare in your threefold, fowerfold Tombe.
To lodge all foure in one bed make a shift
Untill Doomesdaye, for hardly will a fift,
Betwixt this day and that, by Fate be slayne
For whom your Curtaines may be drawn againe.

The date of the sonnet of which these are the opening lines can be only approximately determined. It must be earlier, however, than 1623; for in that year Jonson alludes to it in verses presently to be quoted. And it must be later than the erection of the monument to Shakespeare's memory in Trinity Church, Stratford, in or soon after 1618, for in the lines which follow those given above the writer apostrophizes Shakespeare as sleeping "Under this carvèd marble of thine owne." The sonnet contemplates the removal of Shakespeare's remains to Westminster, and

arranges the poets already lying there not in actual but chronological order.[1]

To these verses Jonson, as I have said, alludes in the series of stanzas prefixed to the Shakespeare folio of 1623,— *To the memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakespeare and what he hath left us.* Ben Jonson intends, however, no slight to Beaumont and the other poets mentioned by Basse, when, in his rapturous eulogy, he declines to regard them as the peers of Shakespeare. On the contrary this lover at heart, and in his best moments, of Beaumont, bestows a meed of praise: they are "great Muses,"— Chaucer, Spenser, Beaumont,— but merely "disproportioned," if one judge critically, in the present comparison, as are, indeed, Lyly, Kyd, and Marlowe. Not these, but "thundering Æschylus," Euripides, and Sophocles, Pacuvius, Accius, "him of Cordova dead," must be summoned

> To life againe to heare thy Buskin tread
> And shake a Stage.

Therefore it is, that Jonson calls —

> My Shakespeare rise; I will not lodge thee by
> Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye
> A little further to make thee a roome:
> Thou art a Moniment without a toombe,

[1] The version given above is that of Brit. Mus. *MS. Lansdowne 777.* Of other versions one is attributed to Donne; but the Lansdowne is the most authentic, and the evidence of authorship is all for Basse, whose name follows in the Lansdowne manuscript. So, Miss L. T. Smith in *Centurie of Praise,* p. 139.

And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
That I not mixe thee so, my braine excuses;
I meane with great, but disproportion'd Muses.

That Beaumont was regarded by his immediate contemporaries not as a professional, but literary, dramatist,— a poet, and a person of social eminence,— appears from Drayton's *Epistle to Henery Reynolds, Esq., Of Poets and Poesy,* published 1627, from which I have earlier quoted. Here the writer, appraising the poets " who have enrich'd our language with their rhymes " informs his " dearly loved friend " that he does not

meane to run
In quest of these that them applause have wonne
Upon our Stages in these latter dayes,
That are so many; let them have their bayes,
That doe deserve it; let those wits that haunt
Those publique circuits, let them freely chaunt
Their fine Composures, and their praise pursue;

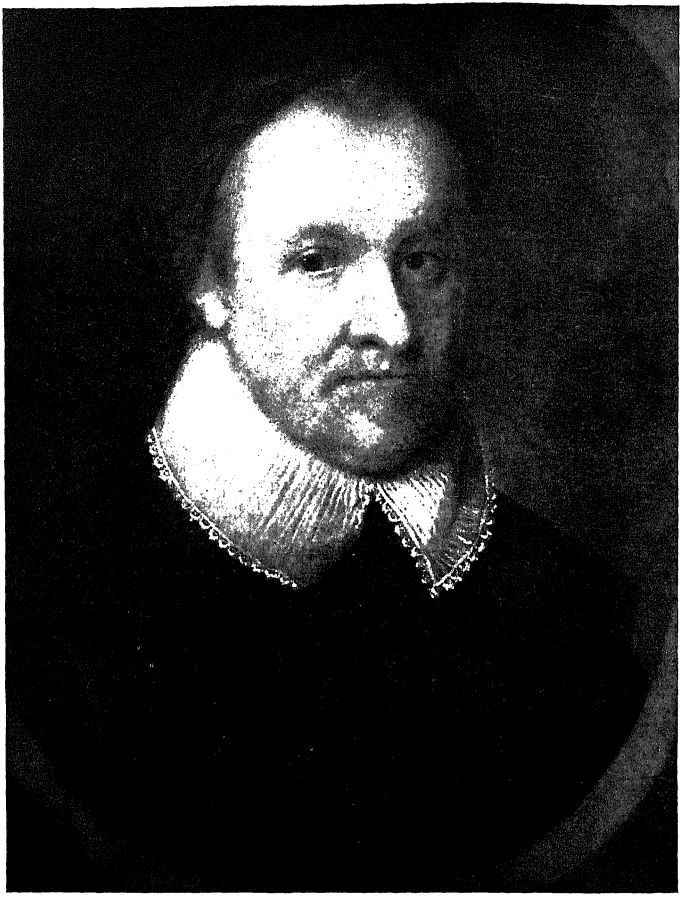
and thus, we may conjecture, he excuses the omission of such men as Middleton, Fletcher, and Massinger. Beginning with Chaucer, " the first of ours that ever brake Into the Muses' treasure, and first spake In weighty numbers," Drayton pays especial honour to " grave, morall Spencer," " noble Sidney . . . heroe for numbers and for prose," Marlowe with his " brave translunary things," Shakespeare of " as smooth a comicke vaine . . . as strong conception, and as cleere a rage, As any one that trafiqu'd with the Stage," " learn'd Johnson . . . Who had drunke deepe of

the Pierian spring," and "reverend Chapman" for his translations: then he passes to men of letters whom he had loved, Alexander and Drummond, and concludes the roll-call with his two Beaumonts and his Browne, his bosom friends, rightly born poets and "Men of much note, and no lesse nobler parts." This letter not only speaks the opinion of Drayton concerning the standing of the two Beaumonts in poetry, but incidentally asserts the popularity of their work, for the author informs his correspondents that he "ties himself here only to those few men"

> Whose works oft printed, set on every post,
> To publique censure subject have bin most.

By 1627 all of the dramas in which Francis had an undoubted share, except *The Coxcombe* had been printed; and some of his poems had appeared as early as 1618 in a little volume that included also Drayton's elegies on Lady Penelope Clifton and the three sons of Lord Sheffield, and Verses by 'N. H.'

This volume is Henry Fitzgeffrey's *Certayn elegies done by sundrie excellent wits* (Fr. Beau., M. Dr., N. H.), with *Satyres and Epigrames.* Fitzgeffrey, by the way, was of Lincoln's Inn in Beaumont's time; and so were others connected with this volume, by dedications or commendatory verses: Fitzgeffrey's "chamber-fellow and nearest friend, Nat. Gurlin"; Thomas Fletcher, and John Stephens, the satirist, who had been entered member of the Inn in 1611. They must all have been known by Beaumont when he was writing his elegies. The 'N. H.' thus posthumously associated with our dramatist was, I think, the mathe-



MICHAEL DRAYTON

From the portrait in the Dulwich Gallery

matician, philosopher, and poet, Nicholas Hill[1] Beaumont could not have failed to know him. He was of St. John's College, Oxford; he wrote and published a *Philosophia Epicurea Democritiana* to which, mentioning him by name, Ben Jonson alludes in his epigram (CXXXIV) *Of The Famous Voyage* of the two wights who "At Bread-streets *Mermaid* having dined and merry, Propos'd to goe to Holborne in a wherry." He was the secretary and favourite of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was a good deal of a wag, and well acquainted with our old friend Serjeant Hoskyns of the *Convivium Philosophicum*. He died in 1610.

Whether the anonymous writer on *The Time Poets*[2] was a personal acquaintance of Beaumont we cannot tell. The definite qualities of the poet which he emphasizes are, however, as likely to be drawn from life and conversation as from the perusal of his dramas. The lines, apparently composed between 1620 and 1636, begin,

> One night, the great Apollo, pleas'd with Ben,
> Made the odde number of the Muses ten;
> The fluent Fletcher, Beaumont rich in sense,
> In complement and courtship's quintessence;
> Ingenious Shakespeare, Massinger that knows
> The strength of plot to write in verse or prose,—

and continue with "cloud-grappling Chapman" and others, as of the ten Muses.

[1] Mr. Bullen, *D.N.B.*, under *Fitzgeffrey*, queries "Nathaniel Hooke." I have not been able to identify Hooke.

[2] *Choice Drollery, Songs, and Sonnets, 1656, in Sh. Soc. Pap.*, III, 172.

That Thomas Heywood, the dramatist, was a personal friend,— we may be sure,— the kind of friend who having a sense of humour did not resent Beaumont's genial satire in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* upon his bourgeois drama of *The Foure Prentises* of London. Writing as late as 1635, he remembers Francis as a wit:

> Excellent Bewmont, in the formost ranke
> Of the rarest Wits, was never more than Franck.—

The touch of familiarity with which Heywood [1] causes that whole row of poets, many of them then dead, Robin Green, Kit Marlowe, the Toms (Kyd, Watson and Nashe), mellifluous Will, Ben, and the rest, to live for posterity as human, and lovable, gracefully heightens the compliment for one and all.

We may surmise that one more eulogist of Beaumont, his kinsman,[2] Sir George Lisle, a marvellously gallant cavalier, who distinguished himself at Newberry, and was shot by order of Fairfax about the end of the Civil War, was old enough in 1616 to have known our poet. Though Sir George, in his verses for the Beaumont and Fletcher folio of 1647, lays special stress upon the close-woven fancy of the two playwrights, he seems to have a first-hand information, not common to the younger writers of these commendatory poems, concerning Beaumont's share in at least one of the tragedies. He ascribes to him, not to Fletcher,— as we know by modern textual tests,

[1] *The Hierarchie of the Blessed Angells.*

[2] Through the Villierses and therefore probably through the Coleorton Beaumonts.

correctly,— the nobler scenes of "brave Mardonius" in *A King and No King*. One attaches, therefore, more than mere literary, or hearsay, significance to his selection for special praise of Beaumont's force, when he says,

> Thou strik'st our sense so deep,
> At once thou mak'st us Blush, Rejoyce, and Weep.
> Great father Johnson bow'd himselfe when hee
> (Thou writ'st so nobly) vow'd he envy'd thee.

CHAPTER XIV

TRADITION, AND TRADITIONAL CRITICISM

WHAT we learn from tradition, and from the criticism of the century following Beaumont's death, adds little to what we already have observed concerning his life and personality. Concerning his share in the joint-plays, it adds much, mostly wrong; but of that, later. Mosely, in his address of *The Stationer to the Readers* prefixed to the folio of 1647, announces that knowing persons had generally assured him "that these Authors were the most unquestionable Wits this Kingdome hath afforded. Mr. Beaumont was ever acknowledged a man of a most strong and searching braine; and (his yeares considered) the most Judicious Wit these later Ages have produced. He dyed young, for (which was an invaluable losse to this Nation) he left the world when hee was not full thirty yeares old. Mr. Fletcher survived, and lived till almost fifty; whereof the World now enjoyes the benefit." The dramatist, Shirley, in his address *To the Reader* of the folio, says "It is not so remote in Time, but very many Gentlemen may remember these Authors; and some familiar in their conversation deliver them upon every pleasant occasion so fluent, to talke a Comedy. He must be a bold man," continues he, with a prophetic commonsense, "that

dares undertake to write their Lives. What I have to say is, we have the precious Remaines; and as the wisest contemporaries acknowledge they Lived a Miracle, I am very confident this volume cannot die without one." Shirley also reminds the Reader that but to mention Beaumont and Fletcher "is to throw a cloude upon all former names and benight Posterity." "This Book being, without flattery, the greatest Monument of the Scene that Time and Humanity have produced, and must Live, not only the Crowne and sole Reputation of our owne, but the stayne of all other Nations and Languages." To such a pitch had the vogue of our dramatists risen in the thirty years after Beaumont's death! Not only Shakespeare and learnèd Ben, but Sophocles and Euripides may vail to them. "This being,"—and here we catch a vision from life itself,—"this being the Authentick witt that made Blackfriars an Academy, where the three howers spectacle while Beaumont and Fletcher were presented, were usually of more advantage to the hopefull young Heire, than a costly, dangerous, forraigne Travell, with the assistance of a governing Mounsieur, or Signior, to boote. And it cannot be denied but that the spirits of the Time, whose Birth and Qualitie made them impatient of the sowrer ways of education, have from the attentive hearing these pieces, got ground in point of wit and carriage of the most severely employed Students, while these Recreations were digested into Rules, and the very pleasure did edifie."

So far as the plays printed in this folio are concerned, not much of this praise belongs to Beaumont; for, as we now know, not more than two of them,

The Coxcombe and the *Masque of the Inner Temple,* bear his impress. But Shirley is thinking of the reputation of the authors in general; and he writes with an eye to the sale of the book.

Since we shall presently find opportunity to consider the trend of opinion during the seventeenth century regarding the respective shares of the dramatists in composition, but a word need be said here upon the subject,—and that as to the origin of a tradition speedily exaggerated into error: namely, that Beaumont's function in the partnership was purely of gravity and critical acumen. From the verses of John Berkenhead, an Oxford man, born in 1615, a writer of some lampooning ability and, in 1647 reader in moral philosophy at the University, we learn that, he, at least, thought it impossible to separate the faculties of the two dramatists, which "as two Voices in one Song embrace (Fletcher's keen Trebble, and deep Beaumont's Base"); that, however, there were some in his day who held "That One [Fletcher] the Sock, th' Other [Beaumont] the Buskin claim'd,"

> That should the Stage embattaile all its Force,
> Fletcher would lead the Foot, Beaumont the Horse;

and that Beaumont's was "the understanding," Fletcher's "the quick free will." Such discrimination, as I have said, Berkenhead disavows; but he is of the opinion, nevertheless, that the rules by which their art was governed came from Beaumont:

> So Beaumont dy'd; yet left in Legacy
> His Rules and Standard-wit (Fletcher) to Thee.

And still another Oxford man, born four years before Beaumont's death, the Reverend Josias Howe, reasserting the essential unity of their compositions, concedes with regard to Fletcher,—

> Perhaps his quill flew stronger, when
> 'T was weavèd with his Beaumont's pen;
> And might with deeper wonder hit.

These and similar statements of 1647, essentially correct, concerning the force, depth, and critical acumen of Beaumont had been anticipated in the testimonials printed during his lifetime and down to 1640, especially in those of Jonson, Davies, Drayton, and Earle.

A verdict, much more dogmatic, and responsible for the erroneous tradition which long survived, proceeded from one of the "sons of Ben," William Cartwright, himself an author of dramas, junior proctor of the University of Oxford in 1643, and "the most florid and seraphical preacher in the university." He may have derived the germ of his information from Jonson himself, but he had developed it in a one-sided manner when, writing in 1643 "upon the report of the printing of the dramaticall poems of Master John Fletcher," he implied that the genius of "knowing Beaumont" was purely restrictive and critical,— telling us that Beaumont was fain to bid Fletcher "be more dull," to "write again," to "bate some of his fire"; and that even when Fletcher had "blunted and allayed" his genius according to the critic's command, the critic Beaumont, not yet satisfied,

> Added his sober spunge, and did contract
> Thy plenty to lesse wit to make 't exact.

This distorted image of Beaumont's artistic quality as merely critical lived, as we shall see, for many a year. We shall, also, see that it is not from any such secondary sources that supplementary information regarding the poet himself is to be derived, but from a scientific determination of his share in the dramas ordinarily and vaguely assigned to an undifferentiated Beaumont and Fletcher.

CHAPTER XV

A FEW WORDS OF FLETCHER'S LATER YEARS

BESIDE the dramas which there is any meritorious reason for assigning to the joint-authorship of the two friends, some dozen plays were produced by Fletcher alone, or in collaboration with others, before the practical cessation, in 1613, or thereabout, of Beaumont's dramatic activity. After that time Fletcher's name was attached, either as sole author or as the associate of Massinger, Field, William Rowley, and perhaps others, to about thirty more. From 1614 on, he was the successor of Shakespeare as dramatic poet of the King's Players. Jonson's masques delighted the Court, but no writer of tragedy or comedy,— not Jonson, nor Philip Massinger, who was now Fletcher's closest associate, nor Middleton or Rowley, Dekker, Ford, or Webster,— compared with him in popularity at Court and in the City. He is not merely an illustrious personality, the principal author of harrowing tragedies such as *Valentinian,* the sole author of tragicomedies such as *The Loyall Subject,* and long-lived comedies — *The Chances, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife,* and several more,— he is a syndicate: he stands sponsor for plays like *The Queene of Corinth* and *The Knight of Malta* in which others collaborated largely with him; and his name is occa-

sionally stamped upon plays of associates, in which he had no hand whatever. "Thou grew'st," says his contemporary and admirer, John Harris,—

> "Thou grew'st to govern the whole Stage alone:
> In which orbe thy throng'd light did make the star,
> Thou wert th' Intelligence did move that Sphear.

Dr. Harris, Professor of Greek at Oxford in the heyday of Fletcher's glory, and a most distinguished divine, writes, in 1647, as one who had known Fletcher, personally,— observes his careless ease in composing, his manner of conversation,

> The Stage grew narrow while thou grew'st to be
> In thy whole life an Exc'llent Comedie,—

and admires his behaviour:

> To these a Virgin-modesty which first met
> Applause with blush and fear, as if he yet
> Had not deserv'd; till bold with constant praise
> His browes admitted the unsought-for Bayes.

So, addressing the public, concludes this panegyrist,—

> Hee came to be sole Monarch, and did raign
> In Wits great Empire, abs'lute Soveraign.

It is of these years of triumph that another of "the large train of Fletcher's friends," Richard Brome, Ben Jonson's faithful servant and loving friend, and his disciple in the drama, tells us:

His Works (says Momus) nay, his Plays you 'd say:
Thou hast said right, for that to him was Play
Which was to others braines a toyle: with ease
He playd on Waves which were Their troubled Seas. . . .
But to the Man againe, of whom we write,
The Writer that made Writing his Delight,
Rather then Worke. He did not pumpe, nor drudge,
To beget Wit, or manage it; nor trudge
To Wit-conventions with Note-booke, to gleane
Or steale some Jests to foist into a Scene:
He scorn'd those shifts. You that have known him, know
The common talke that from his Lips did flow,
And run at waste, did savour more of Wit,
Then any of his time, or since have writ,
(But few excepted) in the Stages way:
His Scenes were Acts, and every Act a Play.
I knew him in his strength; even then when He —
That was the Master of his Art and Me —
Most knowing Johnson (proud to call him Sonne)
In friendly Envy swore, He had out-done
His very Selfe. I knew him till he dyed;
And at his dissolution, what a Tide
Of sorrow overwhelm'd the Stage; which gave
Volleys of sighes to send him to his grave;
And grew distracted in most violent Fits
(For She had lost the best part of her Wits) . . .

"Others," concludes this old admirer unpretentiously,

Others may more in lofty Verses move;
I onely, thus, expresse my Truth and Love.

No better testimony to the character of the man who, even though Jonson was still writing, became

absolute sovereign of the stage after Shakespeare and Beaumont had ceased, can be found than such as the preceding. To Fletcher's innate modesty, other contemporaries, Lowin and Taylor, who acted in many of his plays, bear testimony in the *Dedication* of *The Wild-Goose Chase:* "The Play was of so Generall a receiv'd Acceptance, that (he Himself a Spectator) we have known him unconcern'd, and to have wisht it had been none of His; He, as well as the throng'd Theatre (in despite of his innate Modesty) Applauding this rare issue of his Braine." He was the idol of his actors: "And now, Farewell, our Glory!" continue, in 1652, these victims of "a cruell Destinie" — the closing of the theatres at the outbreak of the Civil War,—"Farewell, your Choice Delight, most noble Gentlemen! Farewell, the grand Wheel that set Us Smaller Motions in Action!"— The wheel of Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger. —"Farewell, the Pride and Life o' the Stage! Nor can we (though in our Ruin) much repine that we are so little, since He that gave us being is no more."

Fletcher was beloved of great men, as they themselves have left their love on record, of Jonson, Beaumont, Chapman, Massinger. If Shakespeare collaborated with him, that speaks for itself. He was an inspiration to young pastoralists like Browne, and to aspiring dramatists like Field. He was a writer of sparkling genius and phenomenal facility. He was careless of myopic criticism, conscious of his dignity, — but unaffectedly simple,— averse to flattering his public or his patron for bread, or for acquaintance, or for the admiration of the indolent, or for "itch of

greater fame." [1] If we may take him at his word, and estimate him by the noblest lines he ever wrote,— the verses affixed to *The Honest Man's Fortune* (acted, 1613),— the keynote of his character as a man among men, was independence. To those "that can look through Heaven, and tell the stars," he says:

> Man is his own Star, and the soul that can
> Render an honest and a perfect man,
> Commands all light, all influence, all fate;
> Nothing to him falls early, or too late.
> Our Acts our Angels are, or good or ill,
> Our fatal shadows that walk by us still;
> And when the Stars are labouring, we believe
> It is not that they govern, but they grieve
> For stubborn ignorance.

That star is in "the Image of thy Maker's good":

> He is my Star, in him all truth I find,
> All influence, all fate;

and as for poverty, it is "the light to Heaven . . . Nor want, the cause of man, shall make me groan"; for experience teaches us "all we can: To work ourselves into a glorious man." His mistress is not some star of Love, with the increase to wealth or honour she may bring, but of Knowledge and fair Truth:

> So I enjoy all beauty and all youth,
> And though to time her Lights and Laws she lends,
> She knows no Age, that to corruption bends. . . .

Perhaps through all this, there echoes the voice of that

[1] See his *Ode to Sir William Skipwith.*

præsul splendidus, his father, the Bishop, the friend of Sir Francis Drake, of Burghley, and of the forceful Bishop Bancroft,—a father solicitous, at any rate before he fell into the hands of his fashionable second wife and lost favour with the Queen, for the "Chrystian and godlie education" of his children. However that may be,— whether the noble idea of this confession of faith is a projection from the discipline of youth or an induction from the experience of life, the utterance of Fletcher's inmost personality is here:

> Man is his own Star, and that soul that can
> Be honest, is the only perfect man.

Though, in the plays where Beaumont does not control, Fletcher so freely reflects the loose morals of his age, the gross conventional misapprehension of woman's worth, even the cynicism regarding her essential purity,— though Fletcher reflects these conditions in his later plays as well as in his early *Faithfull Shepheardesse,*[1] and though he, for dramatic ends, accepts the material vulgarity of the lower classes and the perverted and decadent heroics of the upper, there still are "passages in his works where he recurs to a conception which undoubtedly had a very vital significance for him—that of a gentleman,"—to the "merit, manners, and inborn virtue" of the gentleman not conventional but genuine.[2] In Beaumont, that

[1] "Thou wert not meant, Sure, for a woman, thou art so innocent," philosophizes the Sullen Shepherd concerning Amoret;—and not only wanton nymphs but modest swains are of the same philosophy.

[2] Ward, *E. Dr. Lit.,* II, 649,—quoting, in the footnote, from *The Nice Valour,* V, 3.

"man of a most strong and searching braine" whose writings and whose record speak the gentleman, he had had the example beside him in the flesh. What that meant is manifest in the encomium of Francis Palmer, written in 1647 from Christ Church, Oxford,

All commendations end
In saying only: Thou wert Beaumont's friend.

The engraving of Fletcher in the 1647 folio was "cut by severall Originall Pieces," says Mosely "which his friends lent me, but withall they tell me that his unimitable Soule did shine through his countenance in such *Ayre* and *Spirit*, that the Painters confessed it was not easie to expresse him: As much as could be, you have here, and the Graver hath done his part." The edition of 1711 is the first to publish "effigies" of both poets, "the Head of Mr. Beaumont, and that of Mr. Fletcher, through the favour of the present Earl of Dorset [the seventh Earl], being taken from Originals in the noble Collection his Lordship has at Knowles." The engravings in the Theobald, Seward and Sympson edition of 1742–1750 are by G. Vertue. The engravings in Colman's edition of 1778, are the same, debased. Those in Weber's edition of 1812, are done afresh,—of Beaumont by Evans, of Fletcher by Blood—apparently from the Knole originals. They are an improvement upon those of earlier editions. In Dyce's edition of 1843–1846, H. Robinson's engraving of Beaumont has nobility; his attempt at Fletcher does not improve upon Blood's. All these are in the reverse. The Variorum edition of 1904–

1905 gives the beautiful photogravure of Beaumont of which I have already spoken, by Walker and Cockerell, from the original at Knole Park; and an equally soft and expressive photogravure of Fletcher, by Emery Walker, from the painting in the National Portrait Gallery. For the first time the dramatists face as in the originals: Beaumont, toward your left, Fletcher, toward your right.

Fletcher's portrait in the National Portrait Gallery reveals a highbred, thoughtful countenance, large eyes unafraid, wide-awake and keen, the nose aquiline and sensitive, wavily curling hair, hastily combed back, or through which he has run his fingers, a careless, half-buttoned jerkin from which the shirt peeps forth, — all in all a man of more vivacious temper, ready and practical quality than Beaumont.

The authorities of the Gallery, especially through the kindness of Mr. J. D. Milner, who has been good enough to look up various particulars for me, inform me that this portrait of John Fletcher, No. 420, was purchased by the Trustees in March 1876, its previous history being unknown. The painting is by a contemporary but unknown artist, and is similar to the portrait at Knole Park. It was engraved in the reverse by G. Vertue in 1729. They also inform me that another portrait of a different type belongs to the Earl of Clarendon. This, I conjecture, must be that which John Evelyn, in a letter to Samuel Pepys, 12 August, 1689, says he has seen in the first Earl of Clarendon's collection — "most of which [portraits], if not all, are at the present at Cornebery in Oxfordshire." But Evelyn adds that "Beaumont and

Fletcher were both in one piece." Yet another portrait said to be of Fletcher, painted in 1625 by C. Janssen, belongs to the Duke of Portland. This Janssen is the Cornelius to whom the alleged portrait of Shakespeare, now at Bulstrode, is attributed. Cornelius did not come to England before Shakespeare's death; and, consequently, not before Beaumont's.

Fletcher died in August 1625. According to Aubrey, "In the great plague, 1625, a Knight of Norfolke (or Suffolke) invited him into the Countrey. He stayed but to make himselfe a suite of cloathes, and while it was makeing, fell sick of the plague and dyed. This I had [1668] from his tayler, who is now [1670] a very old man, and clarke of St. Mary Overy's." The dramatist was buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, the twenty-ninth of that month. Sir Aston Cockayne's statement, in an epitaph on Fletcher and Massinger, that they lie in the same grave, is probably figurative. Aubrey tells us that Massinger, who died in March 1640, and whose burial is recorded in the register of St. Saviour's, was buried not in the church, but about the middle of one of its churchyards, the Bullhead, next the Bullhead tavern. There are memorials now to both poets in the church, as also to Shakespeare, and Beaumont, and to Edward Alleyn, the actor of the old Admiral's company.

It is generally supposed that Fletcher was never married. The name, John Fletcher, was not unusual in the parish of St. Saviour's, and the records of "John Fletcher" marriages may, therefore, not involve the dramatist. But two items communicated to

Dyce[1] by Collier, "more in jest than in earnest," from the Parish-registers, are suggestive, if we reflect that, about 1612 or 1613, the *ménage à trois,* provided it continued so long, would have lapsed at the time of Beaumont's marriage; and if we can swallow the stage-fiction of Fletcher's "maid Joan" in *Bury-Fair* (see page 96 above), whole and as something digestible.

These are Collier's cullings from the Registers:

1612. Nov. 3. John Fletcher and Jone Herring [were married]. *Reg. of St. Saviour's, Southwark.*

John, the son of John Fletcher and of Joan his wife was baptized 25 Feb., 1619. *Reg. of St. Bartholomew the Great.*

If this is our John Fletcher, his marriage would have been about the same time as Beaumont's, and he may have later taken up his residence in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great, on the north side of the river, not far from Southwark. If Fletcher was married in 1612, we may be very sure that his wife was not a person of distinction. His verses *Upon an Honest Man's Fortune,* written the next year, give us the impression either that he is not married and not likely to be, or that he has married one of low estate and breeding, has concluded that the matrimonial game is not worth the candle, and rather defiantly has turned to a better mistress than mortal, who can compensate him for that which through love he has not attained, "Were I in love," he declares,—

[1] Dyce, *B. and F.,* I, lxxiii.

Were I in love, and could that bright Star bring
Increase to Wealth, Honour, and everything:
Were she as perfect good, as we can aim,
The first was so, and yet she lost the Game.
My Mistriss then be Knowledge and fair Truth;
So I enjoy all beauty and all youth.

We may be sure that when Fletcher wrote this poem he had known poverty, sickness, and affliction, but not a consolation in wedded happiness:

Love's but an exhalation to best eyes;
The matter spent, and then the fool's fire dies.

Since many of Collier's "earnests" turn out to be "jests," why not the other way round? That is my apology for according this "jest" a moment's whimsical consideration.

Such is an outline in broad sweep of the activities and common relations of our Castor and Pollux, and a preliminary sketch of the personality of each. With regard to the latter, who is our main concern, the vital record is yet more definitely to be discovered in the dramatic output distinctively his during the years of literary partnership; and to the consideration of his share in the joint-plays we may now turn.

PART TWO

THE COLLABORATION OF BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER

CHAPTER XVI

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM; CRITICAL APPARATUS

MUCH of the confusion which existed in the minds of readers and critics during the period following the Restoration concerning the respective productivity of Beaumont and Fletcher is due to accident. The quartos (generally unauthorized) of individual plays in circulation were, as often as not, wrong in their ascriptions of authorship to one, or the other, or both of the dramatists; and the folio of 1647, which, long after both were dead, first presented what purported to be their collected works, lacked title-pages to the individual plays, and, save in one instance, prefixed no name of author to any play. The exception is *The Maske of the Gentlemen of Grayes-Inne and the Inner Temple* "written by Francis Beaumont, Gentleman," which had been performed, Feb. 20, 1612–13, and had appeared in quarto without date (but probably 1613) as "by Francis Beaumont, Gent." In seven instances, Fletcher is indicated in the 1647 folio by Prologue or Epilogue as author, or author revised, and in general correctly; but otherwise the thirty-four plays included (not counting the *Maske*) are introduced to the public merely by a general title-page as "written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gentlemen. Never printed before, And now

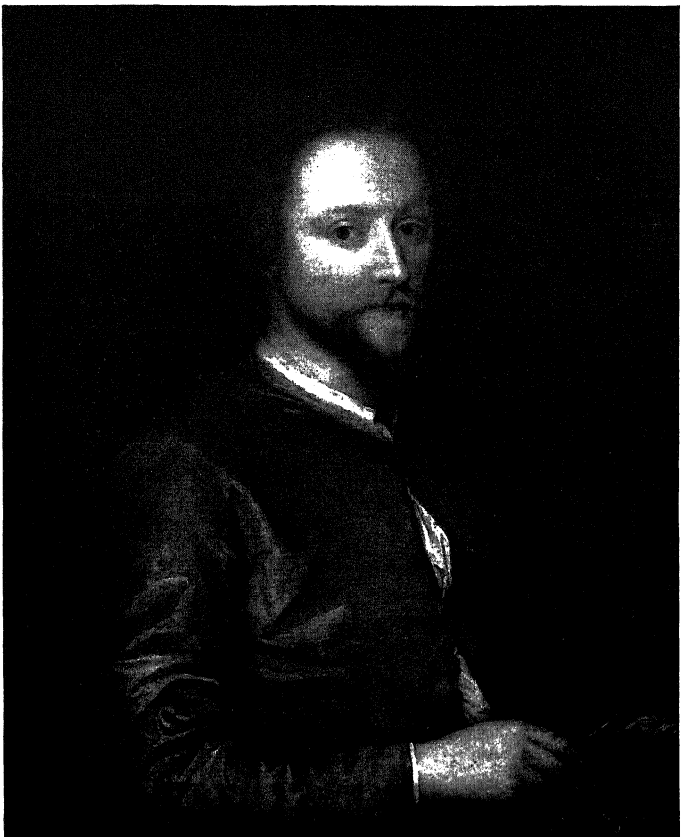
published by the Authours Originall Copies." That the public should have been deceived into accepting most of them as the joint-product of the authors is not surprising. Though it is not the purpose of this discussion to consider plays in which Beaumont was not concerned, it may be said incidentally that of eleven of these productions Fletcher was sole author; Massinger of perhaps one, and with Fletcher of eight, and with Fletcher and others of five more; that in several plays four or five other authors had a hand, and that in at least five Fletcher had no share.[1]

Sir Aston Cockayne was, therefore, fully justified, when, some time between 1647 and 1658, he thus upbraided the publishers of the folio:

In the large book of Playes you late did print
In Beaumont's and in Fletcher's name, why in 't
Did you not justice? Give to each his due?
For Beaumont of those many writ in few,
And Massinger in other few; the Main
Being sole Issues of sweet Fletcher's brain.
But how came I (you ask) so much to know?
Fletcher's chief bosome-friend informed me so.
I' the next impression therefore justice do,
And print their old ones in one volume too;
For Beaumont's works and Fletcher's should come forth,
With all the right belonging to their worth.

In still another poem, printed in 1662, but written not long after 1647, and addressed to his cousin, Charles Cotton, Sir Aston returns to the charge:

[1] See G. C. Macaulay (*Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, VI), and other authorities as in footnote toward end of this chapter.



JOHN FLETCHER

From the painting in the National Portrait Gallery
Painter unknown but contemporary

I wonder, Cousin, that you would permit
So great an Injury to Fletcher's wit,
Your friend and old Companion, that his fame
Should be divided to another's name.
If Beaumont had writ those Plays, it had been
Against his merits a detracting Sin,
Had they been attributed also to
Fletcher. They were two wits and friends, and who
Robs from the one to glorify the other,
Of these great memories is a partial Lover.
Had Beaumont liv'd when this Edition came
Forth, and beheld his ever living name
Before Plays that he never writ, how he
Had frown'd and blush'd at such Impiety!
His own Renown no such Addition needs
To have a Fame sprung from another's deedes:
And my good friend Old Philip Massinger
With Fletcher writ in some that we see there.
But you may blame the Printers: yet you might
Perhaps have won them to do Fletcher right,
Would you have took the pains; for what a foul
And unexcusable fault it is (that whole
Volume of plays being almost every one
After the death of Beaumont writ) that none
Would certifie them so much! I wish as free
Y' had told the Printers this, as you did me.

.

. . . While they liv'd and writ together, we
Had Plays exceeded what we hop'd to see.
But they writ few; for youthful Beaumont soon
By death eclipsed was at his high noon.

The statements especially to be noted in these poems are, first, that Fletcher is present in most of the work published in the earliest folio, that of 1647, Beaumont

in but a few plays, Massinger in other few. This information Cockayne, who was but eight years of age when Beaumont died, and seventeen at Fletcher's death, had from Fletcher's chief bosom-friend, and it was probably corroborated by Massinger himself, with whom Cockayne and his family (as we know from other evidence) had long been acquainted. Second, that *almost every play* in the folio was written after Beaumont's death (1616). This information, also, Cockayne had from his own cousin who was a friend and old companion of Fletcher. This cousin, the chief bosom-friend, as I have shown elsewhere, was Charles Cotton, the elder, who died in 1658, not the younger Charles Cotton (the translator of Montaigne), — for he was not born till five years after Fletcher died. And, third, that not only is the title of the folio "Comedies and Tragedies written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gentlemen" a misnomer, but that the bulk of their joint-plays, "the old ones" (not here included) calls for a volume to itself. A very just verdict, indeed,— this of Cockayne,— for (if I may again anticipate conclusions later to be reached) the only indubitable contributions from Beaumont's hand to this folio are his *Maske of the Gentleman of Grayes Inne* and a portion of *The Coxcombe.*

The confusion concerning authorship was redoubled by the second folio, which appeared as "*Fifty Comedies and Tragedies.* Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Gentlemen. Published by the Authors Original Copies (*etc.*)" in 1679. There are fifty-three plays in this volume; the thirty-five of the first folio, and eighteen previously printed but not

before gathered together. Beside those in which Beaumont had, or could have had, a hand, the eighteen include five of Fletcher's authorship, five in which he collaborated with others than Beaumont; and one, *The Coronation,* principally, if not entirely, by Shirley.[1] As in the 1647 folio, the only indication of respective authorship is to be found in occasional dedications, prefaces, prologues and epilogues. But, while in some half-dozen instances these name Fletcher correctly as author, and, in two or three, by implication correctly designate him or Beaumont, in other cases the indication is wrong or misleading. Where "our poets" are vaguely mentioned, or no hint whatever is given, the uncritical reader is led to ascribe the play to the joint composition of Beaumont and Fletcher. The lists of actors prefixed to several of the dramas afford valuable information concerning date and, sometimes, authorship to the student of stage-history; but the credulous would carry away the impression that Beaumont and Fletcher had collaborated equally in about forty of the fifty-three plays contained in the folio of 1679.

The uncertainty regarding the respective shares of the two authors in the production of this large number of dramas and, consequently, regarding the quality of the genius of each, commenced even during the life of Fletcher who survived his friend by nine years, and it has continued in some fashion down to the present time. Writing an elegy "on Master Beaumont, presently after his death,"[2] that is to say, in

[1] See authorities as in footnote, below.

[2] Included "thirty years" after, among the commendatory

1616–17, John Earle, a precocious youth of sixteen, at Christ Church, Oxford, is so occupied with lament and praise for "the poet so quickly taken off" that he not only ascribes to him the whole of *Philaster* and *The Maides Tragedy* (in both of which it was always known that Fletcher had a share) but omits mention of Fletcher altogether. So far, however, as the estimate of the peculiar genius of Beaumont goes, the judgment of young Earle has rarely been surpassed.

Oh, when I read those excellent things of thine,
Such Strength, such sweetnesse, coucht in every line,
Such life of Fancy, such high choise of braine,—
Nought of the Vulgar mint or borrow'd straine,
Such Passion, such expressions meet my eye,
Such Wit untainted with obscenity,
And these so unaffectedly exprest,
But all in a pure flowing language drest,
So new, so fresh, so nothing trod upon,
And all so borne within thyself, thine owne,
I grieve not now that old Menanders veine
Is ruin'd, to survive in thee againe.

The succeeding exaltation of his idol above Plautus and Aristophanes, nay even Chaucer, is of a generous extravagance, but the lad lays his finger on the real Beaumont when he calls attention to "those excellent things," and to the histrionic quality, the high seriousness, the "humours" and the perennial vitality of Beaumont's contribution to dramatic poetry.

A year or so later, and still during Fletcher's lifetime, we find Drummond of Hawthornden confusing

poems in the folio of 1647; but published earlier with *Beaumont's Poems*, 1640.

in his turn the facts of authorship; for he "reports Jonson as saying that 'Flesher and Beaumont, ten years since, hath written *The Faithfull Shipheardesse*, a tragicomedie well done,'— whereas both Jonson and Beaumont had already addressed lines to Fletcher in commendation of his pastoral." [1] By 1647, as Miss Hatcher has shown, the confusion had crystallized itself into three distinct opinions, equally false, concerning the respective contribution of the authors to the plays loosely accredited to their partnership. These opinions are represented in the commendatory verses prefixed to the first folio. One was that "they were equal geniuses fused into one by the force of perfect congeniality and not to be distinguished from each other in their work,"— thus put into epigram by Sir George Lisle:

> For still your fancies are so wov'n and knit,
> 'T was Francis Fletcher or John Beaumont writ;

and repeated by Sir John Pettus:

> How Angels (cloyster'd in our humane Cells)
> Maintaine their parley, Beaumont-Fletcher tels:
> Whose strange, unimitable Intercourse
> Transcends all Rules.

A second, the dominant view in 1647, was that "the plays were to be accredited to Fletcher alone, since Beaumont was not to be taken into serious account in explaining their production." This opinion is expressed by Waller, who, referring not only to the plays of that folio (in only two of which Beaumont

[1] Miss O. L. Hatcher, *John Fletcher*, Chicago, 1905.

appears) but to others like *The Maides Tragedy* and *The Scornful Ladie* in which, undoubtedly, Beaumont coöperated, says:

> Fletcher, to thee wee do not only owe
> All these good Playes, but those of others, too; . . .
> No Worthies form'd by any Muse but thine,
> Could purchase Robes to make themselves so fine;

and by Hills, who writes,—"upon the Ever-to-be-admired Mr. John Fletcher and his Playes,"—

> "Fletcher, the King of Poets! such was he,
> That earn'd all tribute, claim'd all soveraignty."

The third view was — still to follow Miss Hatcher — that "Fletcher was the genius and creator in the work, and Beaumont merely the judicial and regulative force." Cartwright in his two poems of 1647, as I have already pointed out, emphasizes this view:

> Though when all Fletcher writ, and the entire
> Man was indulged unto that sacred fire,
> His thoughts and his thoughts dresse appeared both such
> That 't was his happy fault to do too much;
> Who therefore wisely did submit each birth
> To knowing Beaumont ere it did come forth;
> Working againe, until he said 't was fit
> And made him the sobriety of his wit;
> Though thus he call'd his Judge into his fame,
> And for that aid allow'd him halfe the name,
> 'T is knowne that sometimes he did stand alone,
> That both the Spunge and Pencill were his owne;
> That himselfe judged himselfe, could singly do,
> And was at last Beaumont and Fletcher too.

A similar view is implied by Dryden, when, in his *Essay of Dramatick Poesie,* 1668, he attributes the regularity of their joint-plots to Beaumont's influence; and reports that even "Ben Jonson while he lived submitted all his writings to his censure, and 'tis thought used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots."

This tradition of Fletcher as creator and Beaumont as critic continued for generations, only occasionally disturbed,[1] in spite of the testimony of Cockayne to Fletcher's sole authorship of most of the plays in the first folio, to the coöperation of Massinger with Fletcher in some, and to the fact that there were enough plays not here included, written conjointly by Beaumont and Fletcher, to warrant the publication of a separate volume, properly ascribed to both. To the mistaken attributions of authorship by Dryden, Rymer, and others, I make reference in my forthcoming Essay on *The Fellows and Followers of Shakespeare,* Part Two.[2] The succeeding history of opinion through Langbaine, Collier, Theobald, Sympson and Seward, Chalmers, Brydges, *The Biographia Dramatica,* Cibber, Malone, Darley, Dyce, and the purely literary critics from Lamb to Swinburne, has been admirably outlined by Miss Hatcher in the first chapter of her dissertation on the *Dramatic Method of John Fletcher.*

With Fleay, in 1874, began the scientific analysis

[1] As by Langbaine, *An Account of the English Dramatick Poets* (1691), who acknowledges Cockayne as the only conclusive authority upon the subject.

[2] *R.E.C.,* Vol. III.

of the problem, based upon metrical tests as derived from the investigation of the individual verse of Fletcher, Massinger, and Beaumont. His method has been elaborated, corrected, and supplemented by additional rhetorical and literary tests, on the part of various critics, some of whom are mentioned below.[1] The more detailed studies in metre and style are by R. Boyle, G. C. Macaulay, and E. H. Oliphant; and the best brief comparative view of their conclusions as regards Beaumont's contribution is to be found in R. M. Alden's edition of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* and *A King and No King*. To the chronology of the plays serviceable introductions are afforded by Macaulay in the list appended to his chapter in the sixth volume of the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, and by A. H. Thorndike in his *Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher upon Shakespeare*.

Concerning the authorship of the successive scenes

[1] F. G. Fleay, in *New Shakespeare Society Transactions*, 1874; *Shakespeare Manual*, 1876; *Englische Studien*, IX (1866); *Chronicle of the English Drama*, 1891. R. Boyle, in *Engl. Stud.*, V, VII, VIII, IX, X, XVII, XVIII, XXVI, XXXI (1881-1902), and in *N. Shaksp. Soc. Trans.*, 1886. G. C. Macaulay, *Francis Beaumont*, 1883; and in *Cambridge History of English Literature*, VI (1910). A. H. Bullen, article *John Fletcher* in *Dictionary of National Biography*, XIX (1889). E. H. Oliphant, in *Engl. Stud.*, XIV, XV, XVI (1890-92). A. H. Thorndike, *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare*, 1901; Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*, etc. (Belles Lettres Series), 1910. R. M. Alden, Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, etc. (Belles Lettres Series), 1910. The introductions in the *Variorum Edition*, 1904, 1905. For a general treatment of the subject see, also, A. W. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature*, II, 155–248 (1875), II, 642–764 (1899), and F. E. Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama*, II, 184-204, and for bibliography, 526. For general bibliography, Thorndike and Alden in Belles Lettres Series, as above; and *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, VI, 488-496.

in a few of the plays undoubtedly written in partnership by Beaumont and Fletcher a consensus of opinion has practically been reached. Concerning others, especially those in which a third or fourth hand may be traced, the difference of opinion is still bewildering. This divergence is due, perhaps, to the proneness of the critic to emphasize one or more tests out of relation to the rest, or to forget that though individual scenes were undertaken now by one, now by the other of the colleagues, the play as a whole would be usually planned by both, but any individual scene or passage revised by either. The tests of external evidence have of course been applied by all critics, but as to events and dates there is still variety of opinion. Of the internal criteria, those based upon the peculiarities of each partner in respect of versification have been so carefully studied and applied that to repeat the operation seems like threshing very ancient straw; but to accept the winnowings of others, however careful, is unsatisfactory. Tests of rhetorical habit and tectonic preference have also been, in general, attempted; but not, I think, exhaustively. And, though much has been established, and availed of, in analysis, there remains yet something to desire in the application of the more subtle differentiæ yielded by such preliminary methods of investigation,— what these differentiæ teach us concerning the temperamental idiosyncrasies of each of the partners in scope and method of observation, in poetic imagery, in moral and emotional insight and elevation, intellectual outlook, philosophical and religious conviction.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD

THE plays contained in the first folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Comedies and Tragedies*, 1647, are *The Mad Lover, The Spanish Curate, The Little French Lawyer, The Custome of the Countrey, The Noble Gentleman, The Captaine, The Beggers Bush, The Coxcombe, The False One, The Chances, The Loyall Subject, The Lawes of Candy, The Lovers Progresse, The Island Princesse, The Humorous Lieutenant, The Nice Valour, The Maide in the Mill, The Prophetesse, The Tragedy of Bonduca, The Sea Voyage, The Double Marriage, The Pilgrim, The Knight of Malta, The Womans Prize* or *The Tamer Tamed, Loves Cure, The Honest Mans Fortune, The Queene of Corinth, Women Pleas'd, A Wife for a Moneth, Wit at Severall Weapons, The Tragedy of Valentinian, The Faire Maide of the Inne, Loves Pilgrimage, The Maske of the Gentlemen of Grayes Inne, and the Inner Temple, at the Marriage of the Prince and Princesse Palatine of Rhene* written by Francis Beaumont, Gentleman, *Foure Playes* (or *Moralle Representations) in One.*

Of these thirty-five, which purport to be printed from "the authours originall copies," only one, as I have already said, *The Maske,* had been published before.

The second folio, entitled *Fifty Comedies and Tragedies,* 1679, contains, beside those above mentioned, eighteen others, one of which, *The Wild-Goose Chase,* had been published separately and in folio, 1652. The remaining seventeen said to be "published from the Authors' Original Copies," are printed from the quartos. They are *The Maides Tragedy, Philaster, A King and No King, The Scornful Ladie, The Elder Brother, Wit without Money, The Faithfull Shepheardesse, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, Monsieur Thomas, Rollo, The Knight of the Burning Pestle, The Night-Walker, The Coronation, Cupids Revenge, The Two Noble Kinsmen, Thierry and Theodoret,* and *The Woman-Hater.*

In addition to these fifty-three plays, one, *The Faithful Friends,* entered on the Stationers' Registers in 1660, as by Beaumont and Fletcher, was held in manuscript until 1812, when it was purchased by Weber from "Mr. John Smith of Furnival's Inn into whose possession it came from Mr. Theobald, nephew to the editor of Shakespeare," and published.

According to the broadest possible sweep of modern opinion, the presence of Beaumont cannot by any *tour de force* be conjectured in more than twenty-three of the fifty-four productions listed above. The twenty-three are (exclusive of *The Maske) The Woman-Hater, The Knight of the Burning Pestle, Cupids Revenge, The Scornful Ladie, The Maides Tragedy, A King and No King, Philaster, Foure Playes in One, Loves Cure, The Coxcombe, The Captaine, Thierry and Theodoret, The Faithful Friends, Wit at Severall Weapons, Beggers Bush, Loves Pilgrimage, The*

Knight of Malta, The Lawes of Candy, The Nice Valour, The Noble Gentleman, The Faire Maide of the Inne, Bonduca, and *The Honest Mans Fortune.* With regard to the last twelve of these plays beginning with *Thierry and Theodoret* there is no convincing proof that more than the first four were written before February 1613, when after preparing the *Maske* for the Lady Elizabeth's marriage to the Elector Palatine, Beaumont seems (except for his share of *The Scornful Ladie* which I date about 1614) to have withdrawn from dramatic activity,—perhaps because of his own marriage about that time and withdrawal to the country, or because of failing health; and there is no generally accepted historical or textual evidence that Beaumont had any hand even in these four. Of the eight remaining at the end of the list, four may be dated before Beaumont's death in 1616: *The Honest Mans Fortune,* which is said on manuscript evidence to have been played in the year 1613, but probably later than August 5;[1] *Bonduca,* which Oliphant asserts is an alteration by Fletcher of an old drama of Beaumont's, but which other authorities assign to Fletcher alone; and, on slighter evidence, *Loves Pilgrimage,* and *The Nice Valour.* The balance of proof with regard to the other four, *The Knight of Malta, The Lawes of Candy, The Noble Gentleman,* and *The Faire Maide of the Inne,* is altogether in favour of their composition after Beaumont's death.

In each of these twelve plays, however, beginning with *Thierry* and ending with *The Honest Mans For-*

[1] See Fleay, *Chron. Eng. Dram.,* I, 195; and W. W. Greg, *Henslowe Papers,* 90.

tune, an occasional expert thinks that he finds a speech or a scene in Beaumont's style, and concludes that the play in its present form is a revision of some early effort in which that dramatist had a hand. But where one critic surmises Beaumont, another detects Beaumont's imitators; and where one conjectures Fletcher and Beaumont conjoined, half a dozen assert Fletcher, assisted, or revised by anywhere from one to four contemporaries,— Field or Daborne or Massinger, Middleton or Rowley, or First and Second Unknown. I have examined these plays and the evidence, as carefully as I have those which have more claim to consideration among the Beaumont possibilities, and have applied to them all the tests which I shall presently describe; and have come to the conclusion that Beaumont had nothing to do with any of the twelve.

There remain, then, of the twenty-three plays enumerated above as Beaumont-Fletcher possibilities, only eleven of which I can, on the basis of external or internal evidence, or both, safely say that they were composed before Beaumont ceased writing for the stage, and that he had, or may have had, a hand in writing some of them. These are, in the order of their first appearance in print: *The Woman-Hater,* published without name of author in 1607; *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* also anonymous, published in 1613; *Cupids Revenge,* published as Fletcher's in 1615; *The Scornful Ladie,* published in 1616, as Beaumont and Fletcher's, just after the death of the former; *The Maides Tragedy,* published, without names of authors, in 1619; *A King and No King,* published as Beaumont and Fletcher's in 1619; *Philaster,* published as Beau-

mont and Fletcher's in 1620; and *Foure Playes in One, Loves Cure, The Coxcombe,* and *The Captaine,* first published in the 1647 folio, without ascription of authorship on the title-page, but as of the "Comedies and Tragedies written by Beaumont and Fletcher," in general. In the case of *Loves Cure* the Epilogue mentions "our Author"; the Prologue, spoken "at the reviving of this play," attributes it to Beaumont and Fletcher. As for *The Coxcombe,* the Prologue for a revival speaks of "the makers that confest it for their own."

It is worthy of notice that three only of these eleven possible "Beaumont-Fletcher" plays were printed during Beaumont's lifetime,— *The Woman-Hater, The Knight of the Burning Pestle* and *Cupids Revenge,* and that on none of them does Beaumont's name appear as author. The last indeed was ascribed, wrongly, as I shall later show, to Fletcher alone. It should also be noted that four other of the plays, beginning with *The Scornful Ladie* and ending with *Philaster,* were published before the death of Fletcher in 1625; and that while three of them have title-page ascriptions to both authors, one, *The Maides Tragedy,* is anonymous.

To these eleven plays as a residuum I have given the preference in the application of tests deemed most likely to reveal the relative contribution and genius of the authors in partnership. Beside the seven published as stated above during Fletcher's life, two others appeared which I do not include in this residuum, — *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* and *Thierry and Theodoret.* The former, printed between December

22, 1608 and July 20, 1609, is of Fletcher's sole authorship, and will be employed as one of the clues to his early characteristics. The latter, attributed by some critics to both authors was published without ascription of authorship in a quarto of 1621. It does not appear in the folio of 1647, but was printed in second quarto as "by John Fletcher" in 1648, and again as "by F. Beaumont and J. Fletcher" in 1649; and was finally gathered up with the *Comedies and Tragedies* which compose the folio of 1679. Oliphant and Thorndike are of opinion that the play is a revision by Massinger of an original by Beaumont and Fletcher, but I cannot discover in the text evidence sufficient to warrant its inclusion in the list of plays worthy to be investigated as the possible product of the partnership.

The eleven Beaumont-Fletcher plays to which the criteria of internal evidence may be applied with some assurance of success, comprise in their number, fortunately for us, three of which we are informed by external evidence,— the contemporary testimony of John Earle, dated 1616–1617,— that Beaumont was concerned in their composition. These three, *Philaster, The Maides Tragedy,* and *A King and No King,* are a positive residuum to which as a model of the joint-work of our authors we may first, in the effort to discriminate their respective functions when working in partnership, apply the tests of style derived from a study of the plays and poems which each wrote alone.

With this delimitation of the field of inquiry, we are now ready for the consideration of the criteria by which the presence of either author may be detected. The criteria are primarily of versification; then, suc-

cessively and cumulatively, of diction and mer
habit. Ultimately, and by induction, they are of d
matic technique and creative genius.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VERSIFICATION OF FLETCHER AND OF BEAUMONT

1. In Plays Individually Composed.

THE studies of the most experienced critics into the peculiarities of Fletcher's blank verse as displayed in productions of the popular dramatic kind, indubitably written by him alone,[1] such as *Monsieur Thomas* of the earlier period, ending 1613, *The Chances, The Loyall Subject,* and *The Humorous Lieutenant* of the middle period, ending 1619, and *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* of his latest period, indicate that he indulges in an excessive use of double endings, sometimes as many as seventy in every hundred lines, even in triple and quadruple endings; in an abundance of trisyllabic feet; and in a peculiar retention of the old end-stopped line, or final pause,—occasionally in as many as ninety out of a hundred lines. Attention has been directed also to the emphasis which he deliberately places upon the extra syllable of the blank verse, making it a substantive rather than a negligible factor: as in the " brains " and " too " of the following:

Or wander after that they know not where
To find? or, if found how to enjoy? Are men's brains

[1] Some sixteen plays in all.

Made nowadays of malt, that their affections
Are never sober, but, like drunken people
Founder at every new fame? I do believe, too,
That men in love are ever drunk, as drunken men
Are ever loving,—[1]

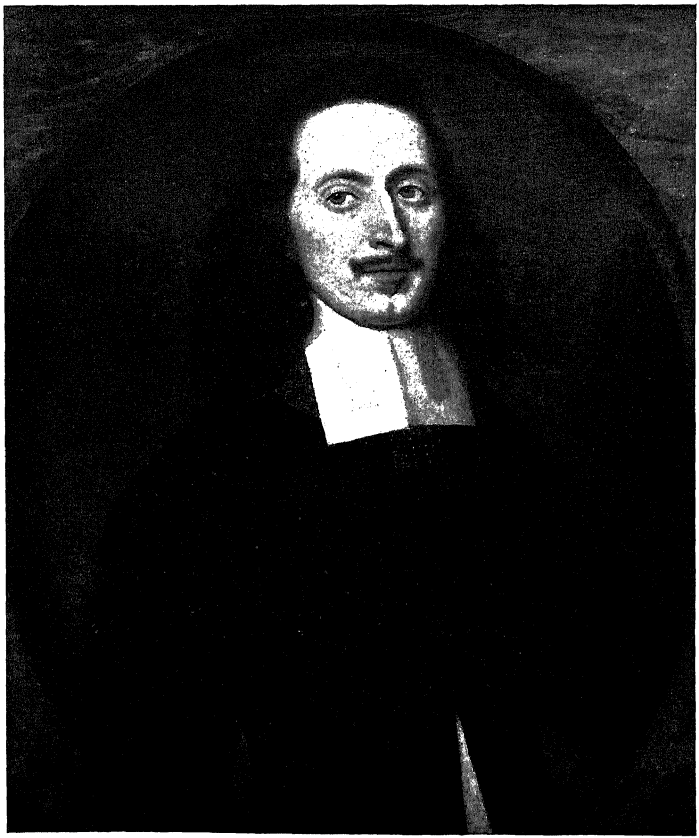
and to his fondness for appending words such as "first," "then," "there," "still," "sir," and even "lady" and "gentlemen" to lines which already possess their five feet. It has also been remarked that he makes but infrequent employment of rhyme.

Of this metrical style examples will be found on pages in Chapter XIX, Section 2, below; or on any page of Fletcher's *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife,* as for instance the following from Act III, Scene 1, 14–23:

Altea. My life|, an in|nocent|!
Marg. That 's it | I aim | at,
That 's it | I hope | too; ⁝ then ⁝ I am sure | I rule | him;
For in|nocents | are like | obe|dient chil|dren
Brought up | under a hard | ∧ moth|er-in-law|, a cru|el,
Who be|ing not us'd | to break|fasts and | colla|tions,
∧ When | they have coarse | bread of|fer'd 'em | are thank|full,
And take | it for | a fa|vour too|. Are the rooms | Made read|y to en|tertain | my friends|? I long | to dance now,
∧ And | to be wan|ton. ⁝ Let | me have | a song.
∧ Is the great | couch up | the Duke | of Medi|na sent?

Here the first half of v. 14 is also the last of the pre-

[1] *The Chances,* I, 1, p. 222 (Dyce); but as a rule I use in this chapter the text of the *Cambridge English Classics.*



JOHN EARLE, BISHOP OF WORCESTER AND SALISBURY
From the portrait in the National Portrait Gallery

ceding line; seven out of ten verses have double endings; one has a triple ending. One, v. 21, has a quadruple ending; unless we rearrange by adding "made ready" to v. 20, so as to scan:

And take 't | for a fa|vour too|. Are the rooms | made read|y
To en|tertain | my friends|? I long | to dance | now.—

Trisyllabic feet occur in nine; final pauses in nine; stress-syllable openings and compensating anapæsts in two; the feminine cæsura (phrasal pause within the foot) in two. The pause in v. 15, after two strong monosyllables of which the first is stressed, produces a jolt, typically Fletcherian.

Now, these peculiarities of versification are not a habit acquired by Fletcher after Beaumont ceased to write with him. They are rife not only in the plays of his middle and later periods, but in those of the earlier period while Beaumont was still at his side. As for instance in *Monsieur Thomas*, entirely Fletcher's of 1607, or at the latest 1611. The reader may be interested to verify for himself by scanning the following passage from Act IV, 2 at which I open at random: Launcelot is speaking:

But to the silent streets we turn'd our furies:
A sleeping watchman here we stole the shooes from,
There made a noise, at which he wakes, and follows:
The streets are durty, takes a Queen-hithe cold,
Hard cheese, and that choaks him o' Munday next:
Windows and signs we sent to Erebus;
A crew of bawling curs we entertain'd last,

When having let the pigs loose in out parishes,
O, the brave cry we made as high as Algate!
Down comes a Constable, and the Sow his Sister
Most traiterously tramples upon Authority:
There a whole stand of rug gowns rowted mainly,
And the King's peace put to flight, a purblind pig here
Runs me his head into the Admirable Lanthorn,—
Out goes the light and all turns to confusion.

No one, once acquainted with this style of blank verse, with its end-stopped lines, double endings, stress-syllable openings, feminine cæsuræ, trisyllabic feet, jolts, and heavy extra syllables, can ever turn it to confusion with the verse of any poet before Browning — certainly not with that of Beaumont.

Our materials for a study of Beaumont's individual characteristics in the composition of dramatic blank verse appear at the first sight to be very scanty; for the only example of which we have positive external evidence that it was written by Beaumont alone, is *The Maske of the Gentlemen of Grayes Inne and the Inner Temple,* and unfortunately some critics have excluded it from consideration because of its exceptionally formal and spectacular character and slight dramatic purpose. Written, however, at the beginning of 1613, when the author's metrical manner was a definitely confirmed habit, it affords, in my opinion, the best as well as the most natural approach to the investigation of Beaumont's versification. The following lines may be regarded as typical:

Is great Jove jealous that I am imploy'd
On her Love-errands? : She did never yet

Claspe weak mortality in her white arms,
As he hath often done: I only come
To celebrate the long-wish'd Nuptials
Here | in Olym|pia, : which | are now | perform'd,
Betwixt two goodly rivers, : that have mixt
Their gentle, rising waves, and are to grow
In|to a thou|sand streams | great | as themselves.

In these nine verses there are no Fletcherian jolts, no double endings. In only two lines trisyllabic feet occur; in only two, final pauses. There are stress-syllable openings in two, with the compensating anapæsts; feminine cæsuræ, in three (dotted); and a stress-syllable opening for the verse-section after the cæsura occurs in but one, whereas there are at least three such in the passage from *Monsieur Thomas,* quoted above.

Nothing could be more pronounced than the difference between the metrical style of Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas* and *Rule a Wife* and that of Beaumont's *Maske,* as illustrated here. Fletcher abounds in double endings, trisyllabic feet, and end-stopped lines, and such conversational or lyrical cadences; Beaumont uses them much more sparingly. But while the difference between the genuinely dramatic blank verse of Fletcher and that of Beaumont is sometimes as pronounced as this, it would be unscientific to base the criterion upon comparison of a mature, conversationally dramatic, composition of the former with a stiffly rhetorical declamatory composition of the latter. For a more suitable comparison we must set Beaumont's *Maske* side by side with something of Fletcher's written in similar formal and declamatory style,—*The Faithfull Shepheardesse,* for instance, a youthful

production in the pastoral spirit and form. Of this a small part, but sufficient for our purpose, is composed in blank verse; and I have cited in the next chapter with another end in view, the opening soliloquy,—to which the reader may turn. But as exemplifying certain of Fletcher's metrical peculiarities, in a style of verse suitable to be compared with Beaumont's in *The Maske,* the following lines from Act I, 1, are perhaps even more distinctive. "What greatness," says the Shepherdesse,—

What greatness, ⁝ or what private hidden power,
Is | there in me, | to draw submission
From this rude man and beast? Sure I am mortal,
The Daughter of a Shepherd; ⁝ he was mortal,
And she that bore me mortal: ⁝ prick my hand,
And it will bleed; a Feaver shakes me, and
The self-same wind that makes the young Lambs shrink
Makes me | a-cold; | my fear says I am mortal.
Yet | have I heard | (my Mother told it me,
And now I do believe it), ⁝ if I keep
My Virgin Flower uncropt, pure, chaste, and fair,
No Goblin, ⁝ Wood-god, Fairy, Elf, or Fiend,
Sa|tyr, or oth|er power that haunts the Groves,
Shall hurt my body, ⁝ or by vain illusion
Draw | me to wan|der ⁝ after idle fires.

We have here, in fifteen lines, four double endings, nine final pauses (end-stopped verses), four stress-syllable openings with compensating anapæsts, and seven feminine cæsuræ. In every way this sample even of Fletcher's more formal style displays, in its salient characteristics, a much closer resemblance in

kind to the sample of his later blank verse quoted from *Rule a Wife,* above, than to that quoted from Beaumont's *Maske.*

When we pass from samples to larger sections, and compare percentages in the one hundred and thirty-one blank verses of *The Maske* and the first one hundred and sixty-three of *The Shepheardesse,* we find that in respect of final pauses there is no great difference. There are, in the former, more than is usual with Beaumont—sixty per cent; in the latter, less than is usual with Fletcher—fifty per cent. But in other respects Beaumont's *Maske* reveals peculiarities of verse altogether different from those of Fletcher, even when he is writing in the declamatory pastoral vein. In the one hundred and thirty-one lines of the *Maske* we find but one double ending; whereas in the first one hundred and sixty-three blank verses of *The Shepheardesse* we count as many as fourteen. In these productions the proportion of feminine cæsurae is practically uniform — about forty per cent. But when we come to examine the more subtle movement of the rhythm, we find that in *The Maske* not more than ten per cent of the lines open with the stress-syllable, while in the blank verse of the *Shepheardesse* fully thirty-five out of every hundred lines have that opening and, consequently, impart the lyrical cadence which pervades much of Fletcher's metrical composition. In the matter of anapæstic substitutions, and of stress-syllable openings for the verse-section after the cæsura, Beaumont is similarly inelastic; while the Fletcher of the *Shepheardesse* displays a marvellous freedom. It follows that in the *Maske* we

encounter but rarely the rhetorical pause, within the verse, compensating for an absent thesis or arsis; while in the pastoral verse of Fletcher we find frequent instances of this delicate dramatic as well as metrical device, and an occasional jolting cæsura.

We are not limited, however, to the material afforded by the *Maske* in our attempt to discover Beaumont's metrical characteristics when writing alone. *The Woman-Hater,* included among the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher in the folio of 1679, and ascribed to both on the title-page of a quarto of 1649, is assigned by the Prologue of the first quarto, 1607, to a single author —" he that made this play." And, though there is no attribution of authorship on the title-page of the 1607 quarto, we know from the application of verse-tests and tests of diction that, in all but three scenes which have evidently been revised,[1] the author was certainly not Fletcher. An examination of the inner structure of the verse of *The Woman-Hater,* reveals, except in those scenes, precisely the peculiarities that distinguish Beaumont's *Maske:* the same infrequency of stress-syllable openings, and of anapæstic substitutions and of suppressed syllables in metrical scheme. In respect of the more evident device of the run-on line *The Woman-Hater* reaches a percentage twice as high as that employed in Fletcher's unassisted popular dramas; and in respect of the double ending it has a percentage only one-quarter as high. We notice also in this play a much more frequent employment of rhyme than in any of

[1] For these scenes, and the reasons for asserting that Fletcher revised them, see Chapter XXIV below.

Fletcher's stage plays, and a much larger proportion of prose both for dialogue and soliloquy.

We should have further basis for conclusion concerning Beaumont's metrical style in independent composition, if we could accept the general assumption that he was the author of the *Induction* to the *Foure Playes in One,* and of the first two plays, *The Triumph of Honour* and *The Triumph of Love.* But for reasons, later to be stated, I agree with Oliphant that the *Induction* and *Honour* are not by Beaumont; and I hold that he can not be traced with certainty even in the two or three scenes of *Love* that seem to be marked by some of his characteristics. The hand of a third writer, Field, is manifest in the non-Fletcherian plays of the series.

But though we can not draw for our purpose upon other plays as his unassisted work, we may derive help from the consideration of two at least of Beaumont's poems,— poems that have something of a dramatic flavour. Though they are in rhyming couplets, they display many of the characteristics of the author's blank verse. In the *Letter to Ben Jonson,* which is conversational, I count of run-on lines, thirty-eight in eighty, almost fifty per cent, as compared with Fletcher's sometimes ten or twenty per cent, in spite of the superior elasticity of blank verse; and of stress-syllable openings in the same letter twenty-four per cent as compared with the thirty-five per cent of Fletcher's more highly cadenced rhythm in the *Shepheardesse.* In Beaumont's *Elegy on the Countess of Rutland,* the last forty-four lines afford a fine example of dramatic fervour — the indictment of the physicians.

Here the run-on lines again abound, almost fifty per cent; while the stress-syllable openings are but sixteen per cent — much lower than one may find in many rhymed portions of the *Shepheardesse*. With regard to all other tests except that of double ending (which does not apply in this kind of heroic couplet), we find that these poems of Beaumont are of a metrical style distinguished by the same characteristics as his blank verse.[1]

2. In Certain Joint-Plays.

If we turn now to a second class of material available,— the three plays indubitably produced in partnership,— and eliminate the portions written in the metrical style of Fletcher, as already ascertained, we may safely attribute the remainder to the junior member of the firm; and so arrive at a final determination of his manner in verse composition.

The three plays, as I have said before, are *Philaster, The Maides Tragedy* and *A King and No King*. A passage, which in the opinion of nearly all critics[2] is by all tests distinctively Fletcherian, may be cited from the first of these as an example of that which we eliminate when we look for Beaumont. It is from the beginning of Act V, 4, where the Captain enters:

> "Philaster, brave Philaster!" Let Philas|ter
> Be deeper in request, my ding [a] dongs,

[1] The reader may judge for himself by referring to the citation from the *Letter* and the poems to the Countess in Chapters VII and XI, above.

[2] Fleay, Boyle, Oliphant, Alden. And even G. C. Macaulay, who once claimed the whole play for Beaumont, says now "perhaps Fletcher's."

My paires of deere Indentures, ⁝ Kings of Clubs,
∧Than | your cold wa|ter-cham|blets ⁝ or | your paint|ings
∧Spit|ted with cop|per. ⁝ Let | not your has|ty Silkes,
∧Or | your branch'd cloth | of bod|kin, ⁝ or | your ti|shues,—
∧Deare|ly belov'd | of spi|cèd cake | and cus|tards,—
∧Your Rob|in-hoods, | ∧Scar|lets and Johns, | ∧tye| your affec|tions
In darknesse to your Shops. No, dainty duc|kers,
∧Up | with your three|-piled spi|rits, ⁝ your | wrought va|lors.
And let | your un|cut col|lers ⁝ make | the King feele |
The measure of your mightinesse, Philas|ter![1]

Note the double endings, the end-stopped lines, the stress-syllable openings, the anapæsts, the feminine cæsuræ (dotted), the two omissions of the light syllable after the cæsural pause and the following accent at the beginning of the verse section, and the six feet of line 13.

Of the non-Fletcherian part of *Philaster,* a typical example is the following from Act I, Scene 2, where Philaster replies to Arethusa's request that he look away from her:

I can indure it: Turne away my face?
I never yet saw enemy that lookt
So dreadfully but that I thought my selfe
As great a Basiliske as he; or spake
So horrible but that I thought my tongue

[1] Q 1622, slightly modernized.

Bore thunder underneath, as much as his,
Nor beast that I could turne from: shall I then
Beginne to feare sweete sounds? a ladies voyce,
Whom I doe love? Say, you would have my life;
Why, I will give it you; for it is of me
A thing so loath'd, and unto you that aske
Of so poore use, that I shall make no price.
If you intreate, I will unmov'dly heare.

Or the famous description of Bellario, beginning:

I have a boy,
Sent by the gods, I hope to this intent,
Not yet seen in the court —

from the same scene.
Or the King's soliloquy in Act II, Scene 4, containing the lines:

You gods, I see that who unrighteously
Holds wealth or state from others shall be curst
In that which meaner men are blest withall:
Ages to come shall know no male of him
Left to inherit, and his name shall be
Blotted from earth.

The reader will at once be impressed with the regularity of the masculine ending. Beaumont does not, of course, eschew the double ending; but, as Boyle has computed, the percentage in this play is but fifteen in the non-Fletcherian passages, whereas the percentage in Fletcher's contribution is thirty-five. The prevalence of run-on lines is also noteworthy; and the infrequency of the stress-syllable openings, anapæsts, and feminine cæsuræ by which Fletcher achieves now conversational abruptness, now lyrical lilt.

In *The Maides Tragedy,* such soliloquies as that of Aspatia in Act V, Scene 4, with its mixture of blank verse and rhyme:

> This is my fatal hour; heaven may forgive
> My rash attempt, that causelessly hath laid
> Griefs on me that will never let me rest,
> And put a Woman's heart into my brest.
> It is more honour for you that I die;
> For she that can endure the misery
> That I have on me, and be patient too,
> May live, and laugh at all that you can do —

are marked by characteristics utterly unlike those of Fletcher's dramatic verse. Also unlike Fletcher are the scenes which abound in lines of weak and light ending, and lines where the lighter syllables of every word must be counted to make full measure. Fletcher did not write:

> Alas, Amintor, thinkst thou I forbear
> To sleep with thee because I have put on
> A maidens strictness;

or

> As mine own conscience too sensible; —
>
> I must live scorned, or be a murderer; —
>
> That trust out all our reputation.

Nor did Fletcher write, with any frequency, improper run-on lines, such as III, 2, 135 (one of his collaborator's scenes):

Speak yet again, before mine anger grow
Up beyond throwing down.

In this play the percentage of run-on lines in Fletcher's scenes is about nineteen; in the scenes not written by him, almost twenty-seven. Fletcher's double endings are over forty per cent; his collaborator's barely ten.

In *A King and No King* similar Beaumontesque characteristics distinguish the major portion of the play from the few scenes generally acknowledged to be written by Fletcher. In Fletcher's scenes [1] one notes the high proportion of stress-syllable openings, and, consequently, of anapæstic substitutions, the subtle omission occasionally of the arsis, and not infrequently of the thesis (or light syllable) after the pause, and the use of the accented syllable at the beginning of the verse-section. While sometimes these characteristics appear in the other parts of the play, their relative infrequency is a distinctive feature of the non-Fletcherian rhythm. A comparison of the verse of Fletcher's Act IV, Scene 2, with that of his collaborator in Act I, Scene 1, well illustrates this difference. The recurrence of the feminine cæsura measures fairly the relative elasticity of the versifiers. It regulates two-thirds of Fletcher's lines; but of his collaborator's not quite one half. Fletcher, for instance, wrote the speech of Tigranes, beginning the second scene of Act IV:

Fool | that I am, | I have | undone | myself,
And | with mine own | hand ¦ turn'd | my for|tune round,

[1] IV, 1, 2, 3; V, 1, 3.

That was| a fair | one: ⁝ I | have child|ishly
Plaid | with my hope | so long, till I have broke | it,
^And now too late I mourn for 't, ⁝ O | Spaco|nia,
Thou hast found | an e|ven way | to thy | revenge | now!
^Why | didst thou fol|low me, | ^like | a faint shad|ow,
To wither my desires? But, wretched fool,
Why | did I plant | thee ⁝ 'twixt | the sun | and me,
^To make | me freeze | thus? ⁝ Why | did I | prefer | her
^To | the fair Prin|cess? ⁝ O | thou fool, | thou fool,
Thou family of fools, | ^live | like a slave | still
And in | thee bear | thine own | ^hell | and thy tor- | ment,—

where, beside the frequent double endings and end-stopped lines, already emphasized in preceding examples, we observe in the run of thirteen lines, six stress-syllable openings with their anapæstic sequences, three omissions of the light syllable after the cæsural pause with the consequent accent at the beginning of the verse-section, and no fewer than six feminine cæsuræ (or pauses after an unaccented syllable) of which three at least (vv. 2, 5, 10) are exaggerated jolts.

Beaumont is capable in occasional passages, as, for instance, Arbaces' speech beginning Act I, 1, 105, of lines rippling with as many feminine cæsuræ. But, utterly unlike Fletcher, he employs in the first thirteen of those lines no double endings, no jolts, only two stress-syllable openings, only four anapæsts, one omitted thesis after the cæsural pause, four end-stopped lines. He is more frequently capable, as in

the passage beginning l. 129, of a sequence without a single feminine cæsura, but with several feminine (or double) endings:

Tigranes. Is it the course of
Iberia, to use their prisoners thus?
Had Fortune throwne my name above Arbaces,
I should not thus have talkt; for in Armenia
We hold it base. You should have kept your temper,
Till you saw home agen, where 't is the fashion
Perhaps to brag.
Arbaces. Bee you my witness, Earth,
Need I to brag? Doth not this captive prince
Speake me sufficiently, and all the acts
That I have wrought upon his suffering land?
Should I then boast? Where lies that foot of ground
Within | his whole | realme : that | I have | not past
Fighting and conquering?[1]

Up to the twelfth verse with its exceptional jolting pause the cæsuræ are masculine, and fall uncompromisingly at the end of the second and third feet.

In respect of the internal structure of the verse the tests for Beaumont are, then, as I have stated them above; in respect of double endings, Boyle and Oliphant have set the percentage in his verse at about twenty, and of run-on lines at thirty. Since the metrical characteristics of those parts of *Philaster, The Maides Tragedy* and *A King and No King* which do not bear the impress of Fletcher's versification, are well defined and practically uniform; since they are of a piece with the metrical manner of *The Woman-Hater,* which is originally, and in general, the work

[1] Quarto of 1619 as given by Alden.

of one author — Beaumont; and since they are also of a piece with the versification of the *Maske,* which is certainly by Beaumont alone, and with that of his best poems,— at least one criterion has been established by means of which we may ascertain what other plays, ascribed to the two writers in common, but on less definite evidence, were written in partnership; and in these we may have a basis for determining the parts contributed by each of the authors.

Fleay and other scholars have grounded an additional criterion upon the fact that the unaided plays of Fletcher contain but an insignificant quantity of prose. They consequently have ascribed to Beaumont most of the prose passages in the joint-plays. But, because in his later development Fletcher found that conversational blank verse would answer all the purposes of prose, it does not follow that in his youthful collaboration with Beaumont he never wrote prose. We find, on the contrary, in the joint-plays that the prose passages in scenes otherwise marked by Fletcher's characteristics of verse, display precisely the rhetorical qualities of that verse. The prose of Mardonius in Act IV, Scene 2 of *A King and No King,* and the prose of Act V, Scenes 1 and 3, which by metrical tests are Fletcher's, are precisely the prose of Fletcher's Dion in Act II, Scene 4 and Act V, Scene 3 of *Philaster,* and the tricks of alliteration, triplet, and iteration, are those of Fletcher's verse in the same scenes.

CHAPTER XIX

FLETCHER'S DICTION

THE verse criterion is, however, not of itself a reagent sufficient to precipitate fully the Beaumont of the joint-plays. For there still exists the certainty that in plotting plays together, each of the collaborators was influenced by the opinion of the other; and the probability that, though one may have undertaken sundry scenes or divers characters in a play, the other would, in the course of general correction, insert lines in the parts written by his collaborator, and would convey to his own scenes the distinguishing rhythm, "humour," or diction of a definite character, created, or elaborated, by his colleague. It, therefore, follows that the assignment of a whole scene to either author on the basis alone of some recurring metrical peculiarity is not convincing. In the same section, even in the same speech, we may encounter insertions which bear the stamp of the revising colleague. For instance, the opening of *Philaster* is generally assigned to Beaumont: it has the characteristics of his prose. But with the entry of the King (line 89) we are launched upon a subscene in verse which, on the one hand, has a higher percentage of double endings (*viz.* 38) than Beaumont ever used, but does not fully come up to Fletcher's usage;

while on the other hand, it has a higher percentage of run-on lines[1] (*viz.* 44) than Fletcher ever used. The other verse tests leave us similarly in doubt. To any one, however, familiar with the diction and characterization of the two authors the suspicion occurs that the scene was written by Beaumont in the first instance; and then worked over and considerably enlarged by his associate. In the first hundred lines of Act II, Scene 4, similar insertions by Fletcher occur, and in Act III, 2.[2]

Such being the case we may expect that an inquiry into the rhetorical peculiarities and mental habit, first of Fletcher, then of Beaumont, will furnish tests corrective of the criterion based upon versification.

1. Fletcher's Diction in *The Faithfull Shepheardesse.*

Though rather poetic than dramatic, and composed only partly in blank verse, *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* affords the best approach to a study of Fletcher's rhetoric; for, written about 1608 and by Fletcher alone, it illustrates his youthful style in the period probably shortly before he collaborated with Beaumont in the composition of *Philaster.*

The soliloquy of Clorin, with which *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* opens, runs as follows:

> Hail, holy Earth, whose cold Arms do imbrace
> The truest man that ever fed his flocks
> By the fat plains of fruitful Thessaly!
> Thus I salute thy Grave; thus do I pay

[1] In the King's speech, 89-121.

[2] For particulars, see Chapter XXV, § 7, below.

My early vows and tribute of mine eyes
To thy still-loved ashes; thus I free
Myself from all insuing heats and fires
Of love; all sports, delights, and [jolly] games,
That shepherds hold full dear, thus put I off:
Now no more shall these smooth brows be [be] girt
With youthful Coronals, and lead the Dance;
No more the company of fresh fair Maids
And wanton Shepherds be to me delightful,
Nor the shrill pleasing sound of merry pipes
Under some shady dell, when the cool wind
Plays on the leaves; all be far away,
Since thou art far away, by whose dear side
How often have I sat Crowned with fresh flowers
For summers Queen, whilst every Shepherds boy
Puts on his lusty green, with gaudy hook
And hanging scrip of finest Cordovan.
But thou art gone, and these are gone with thee
And all are dead but thy dear memorie;
That shall out-live thee, and shall ever spring,
Whilst there are pipes or jolly Shepherds sing.
And here will I, in honour of thy love,
Dwell by thy Grave, forgetting all those joys,
That former times made precious to mine eyes;
Only remembring what my youth did gain
In the dark, hidden vertuous use of Herbs:
That will I practise, and as freely give
All my endeavours as I gained them free.
Of all green wounds I know the remedies
In Men or Cattel, be they stung with Snakes,
Or charmed with powerful words of wicked Art,
Or be they Love-sick, or through too much heat
Grown wild or Lunatic, their eyes or ears
Thickened with misty filme of dulling Rheum;
These I can Cure, such secret vertue lies

40 In herbs applyèd by a Virgins hand.
My meat shall be what these wild woods afford,
Berries and Chestnuts, Plantanes, on whose Cheeks
The Sun sits smiling.[1]

This passage, as we have observed in the preceding section, does not display in full proportion or untrammeled variety the metrical peculiarities of Fletcher's popular dramatic blank verse. The verse is lyric and declamatory: his purely dramatic verse whether in the *Monsieur Thomas* of his earlier period, *The Chances* of the middle period, or *A Wife for a Month* and *Rule a Wife* of his later years, has the feminine endings, redundant syllables, anapæstic substitutions, the end-stopped and sometimes fragmentary lines, the hurried and spasmodic utterance of conversational speech. But, from the rhetorical point of view, this soliloquy — in fact, the whole *Faithfull Shepheardesse* — affords a basis for further discrimination between Fletcher and Beaumont in the joint-plays; for it displays idiosyncrasies of tone-quality and diction which persist, after Beaumont's death, in Fletcher's dramas of 1616 to 1625 as they were in 1607–1609: sometimes slightly modified, more often exaggerated, but in essence the same.

In Clorin's soliloquy, the reader cannot but notice, first, a tendency toward alliteration, the *fed* and *flocks, fat* and *fruitful, fresh* and *fair, pleasing* and *pipes,*— alliteration palpable and somewhat crude, but not yet excessive; second, a balanced iteration of words,—"be far away, Since thou art far away" (ll. 16–17), and, five lines further down, "But thou

[1] As given in the *Camb. Engl. Classics.*

art gone and these are gone with thee," and in lines 31 and 32 "as freely give . . . as I gained them free"; and an iteration of phrases, rhetorical asseverations, negatives, alternatives, questions,—"Thus I salute thy grave; thus do I pay," "thus I free," "thus put I off" (lines 4, 6, 9); third, a preference for iteration in triplets,—"No more shall these smooth brows," "No more the company," "Nor the shrill . . . sound" (lines 10–14), "Or charmed," "or love-sick," "or through too much heat" (lines 35 and 36); fourth, a fondness for certain sonorous words,—"all ensuing heats . . . all sports" (lines 7–8), "all my endeavours . . . all green wounds" (lines 32–33), and the "alls" of lines 16 and 23; fifth, a plethora of adjectives,—"holy earth," "cold arms," "truest man," "fat plains"—many of them pleonastic—"misty film," "dulling rheum"—some forty nouns buttressed by epithets to twenty standing in their own strength; and a plethora of nouns in apposition (preferably triplets),—"all sports, delights, and jolly games" (line 8), "Berries and Chestnuts, Plantanes" (line 42); sixth, an indulgence in conversational tautology: for Fletcher is rarely content with a simple statement,—he must be forever spinning out the categories of a concept; expounding his idea by what the rhetoricians call division; enumerating the attributes and species painstakingly lest any escape, or verbosely as a padding for verse or speech. Of this mannerism The *Faithfull Shepheardesse* affords many instances more typical than those contained in these forty-three lines; but even here Clorin salutes the grave of her lover in a dozen different periphrastic ways. To say

that "all are dead but thy dear memorie" is not enough; she must specify "*that* shall outlive thee." To assert that she knows the remedies of "all green wounds" does not suffice: she must proceed to the enumeration of the wounds; nor to tell us that her meat shall be found in the woods: she must rehearse the varieties of meat. Her soliloquy in the last thirty lines of the scene, not here quoted, is of the same quality: it reminds one of a Henslowe list of stage properties, or of the auctioneer's catalogue that sprawls down Walt Whitman's pages.

And, last, we notice what has been emphasized by G. C. Macaulay and others, that much of this enumeration by division is by way of "parentheses hastily thrown in, or afterthoughts as they occur to the mind." [1] Even in the formal *Shepheardesse* this characteristic lends a quality of naturalness and conversational spontaneity to the speech.

2. In the Later Plays.

If now we turn to one of Fletcher's plays written after Beaumont's death, and without the assistance of Massinger or any other,—say, *The Humorous Lieutenant* of about the year 1619,— we find on every page and passages like the following.[2]— The King Antigonus upon the entry of his son, Demetrius, addresses the ambassadors of threatening powers:

> Do you see this Gent(leman),
> You that bring Thunders in your mouths, and Earthquakes,

[1] G. C. Macaulay, *Francis Beaumont*, p. 45.
[2] Act I, Sc. 1, *Camb. Engl. Classics*, II, p. 286.

To shake and totter my designs? Can you imagine
(You men of poor and common apprehensions)
While I admit this man, my Son, this nature
That in one look carries more fire, and fierceness,
Than all your Masters lives [1]; dare I admit him,
Admit him thus, even to my side, my bosom,
When he is fit to rule, when all men cry him,
And all hopes hang about his head; thus place him,
His weapon hatched in bloud; all these attending
When he shall make their fortunes, all as sudden,
In any expedition he shall point 'em,
As arrows from a Tartar's bow, and speeding,
Dare I do this, and fear an enemy?
Fear your great master? yours? or yours?

Here we have blank verse, distinctively Fletcherian with its feminine endings and its end-stopped lines. But, widely as this differs from the earlier rhythm of *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* and its more lyric precipitancy, the qualities of tone and diction are in the later play as in the earlier. The alliterations may not be so numerous, and are in general more cunningly concealed and interwoven, as in lines 2 to 4; but the cruder kind still appears as a mannerism, the "fire and fierceness," "hopes," "hang," and "head." The iterations of word, phrase, and rhetorical question, and of the resonant "all," the redundant nouns in apposition, the tautological enumeration of categories, proclaim the unaltered Fletcher. The adjectives are in this spot pruned, but they are luxuriant elsewhere in the play. The triplets,—"this man, my son, this nature,"—"admit," "admit," "admit," find compeers on nearly every page:

[1] Crane *MS.* (1625).

Shew where to lead, to lodge, to charge with safetie,—[1]

Here's a strange fellow now, and a brave fellow,
If we may say so of a pocky fellow.[2]—

And now, 't is ev'n too true, I feel a pricking,
A pricking, a strange pricking.[3]—

With such a sadness on his face, as sorrow,
Sorrow herself, but poorly imitates.
Sorrow of sorrows on that heart that caus'd it![4]

In the passages cited above there happen to be, also, a few examples of the elocutionary afterthought:

You come with thunders in your mouth *and earthquakes,*—

As arrows from a Tartar's bow, *and speeding.*—

To this device, and to the intensive use of the pronominal "one" Fletcher is as closely wedded as to the repetition of "all,"—

They have a hand upon us,
A heavy and a hard one.[5]

To wear this jewel near thee; he is a tried one
And one that . . . will yet stand by thee.[6]

Other plays conceded by the critics to Fletcher alone, and written in his distinctive blank verse, display the same characteristics of style: *The Chances*

[1] *Cambridge,* II, p. 290.
[2] *Ibid.,* p. 292.
[3] *Ibid.,* p. 323.
[4] *Ibid.,* p. 346.
[5] *Loyall Subject,* III, 1, end.
[6] *Hum. Lieut., Cambridge,* II, p. 290.

of about 1615, *The Loyall Subject* of 1618 (like *The Humorous Lieutenant* of the middle period), and *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* of the last period, 1624. I quote at random for him who would apply the tests, — first from *The Chances*,[1] the following of the repeating revolver style:

Art thou not an Ass?
And modest as her blushes! what a blockhead
Would e're have popt out such a dry Apologie
For this dear friend? and to a Gentlewoman,
A woman of her youth and delicacy?
They are arguments to draw them to abhor us.
An honest moral man? 't is for a Constable:
A handsome man, a wholesome man, a tough man,
A liberal man, a likely man, a man
Made up by Hercules, unslaked with service:
The same to night, to morrow night, the next night,
And so to perpetuity of pleasures.

Now, from *The Loyall Subject*[2] — the farewell of *Archas* to his arms and colours. I wish I could quote it all as an example of noble noise, enumerative and penny-a-line rhetoric:

Farewell, my Eagle! when thou flew'st, whole Armies
Have stoopt below thee: at Passage I have seen thee
Ruffle the Tartars, as they fled thy furie,
And bang 'em up together, as a Tassel,
Upon the streach, a flock of fearfull Pigeons.
I yet remember when the Volga curl'd,
The agèd Volga, when he heav'd his head up,
And rais'd his waters high, to see the ruins,

[1] John in II, 3, *Camb.*, IV, p. 202.
[2] I, 3, *Camb.*, III, p. 84.

The ruines our swords made, the bloudy ruins;
Then flew this Bird of honour bravely, Gentlemen;
But these must be forgotten: so must these too,
And all that tend to Arms, by me for ever.

And from Act II, Scene 1, pages 101–102, for triplets:

Fight hard, lye hard, feed hard, when they come home, sir. . . .

To be respected, reckon'd well, and honour'd. . . .

Where be the shouts, the Bells rung out, the people? . . .

And, for "alls," and triplets:

And whose are all these glories? why their Princes,
Their Countries and their Friends. Alas, of all these,
And all the happy ends they bring, the blessings,
They only share the labours!

Finally, from *Rule a Wife,* a few instances of the iterations, three-fold or multiple, and redundant expositions. In the first scene [1] Juan describes Leon:

Ask him a question,
He blushes like a Girl, and answers little,
To the point less; he wears a Sword, a good one,
And good cloaths too; he is whole-skin'd, has no hurt yet,
Good promising hopes;

and Perez describes the rest of the regiment,

That swear as valiantly as heart can wish,
Their mouths charg'd with six oaths at once, and whole ones,

[1] *Camb.,* III, p. 170.

That make the drunken Dutch creep into Mole-hills; . . .

and he proceeds to Donna Margarita:

> She is fair, and young, and wealthy,
> Infinite wealthy, *etc.*

And then to Estefania who has tautologized of her chastity, he tautologizes of his harmlessness:[1]

> I am no blaster of a lady's beauty,
> Nor bold intruder on her special favours;
> I know how tender reputation is,
> And with what guards it ought to be preserv'd, lady.

As a fair example of this method of filling a page, I recommend the first scene of the third act; and of eloquence by rhetorical 'division,' Perez's description of his room in the next scene: all in terms of three times three.

If now the reader will turn, by way of confirmation, to *The Triumph of Time* and *The Triumph of Death* of which the metrical characteristics are admittedly Fletcher's, he will find that there, Fletcher, before Beaumont's retirement from the partnership, is already using in purely dramatic composition the rhetorical mannerisms which mark both the lyrically designed *Shepheardesse* of his early years and the genuine dramas of the later.

3. Stock Words, Phrases, and Figures.

Beside the rhetorical mannerisms classified in the preceding paragraphs I might rehearse a long list of Fletcher's favourite expressions and figures of speech. Of the former Mr. Oliphant[2] has men-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 172.
[2] *Engl. Studien*, XIV, 65.

tioned 'plaguily,' 'claw'd,' 'slubber'd,' 'too,' 'shrewdly,' 'stuck with,' 'it shews,' 'dwell round about ye,' 'for ever,' 'no way,' (for 'not at all'). In addition I have noted the reiterated 'thus,' 'miracle,' 'prodigious' (in the sense of 'ominous')— 'prodigious star,' 'prodigious meteor'—'bugs,' 'monsters,' and 'scorpions'; 'torments,' 'diseases,' 'imposthumes,' 'canker,' 'mischiefs,' 'ruins,' 'blasted,' 'rotten'; 'myrmidons'; 'monuments' (for 'tombs'), 'marble'; 'lustre,' 'crystal,' 'jewels,' 'picture,' 'painting,' 'counterfeit in arras'; 'blushes,' 'palates,' 'illusion,' 'abused' (for 'deceived'), 'blessed,' 'flung off,' 'cloister'd up,' 'fat earth,' 'turtle,' 'passion,' 'Paradise.' Oliphant assigns to Fletcher 'pulled on,' but I find that almost as frequently in Beaumont. 'Poison,' 'contagious' and 'loaden,' also abound in Fletcher, but are sometimes used by Beaumont. Fletcher affects alliterative epithets: 'prince of popinjays,' 'pernicious petticoat prince,' 'pretty prince of puppets,'—and antitheses such as 'prince of wax,' 'pelting prattling peace.' His characters talk much of 'silks' and 'satins,' 'branched velvets' and 'scarlet' clothes. They are said to speak in 'riddles'; they are threatened with 'ribald rhymes'; they shall be 'bawled in ballads,' or 'chronicled,' 'cut and chronicled.'

Another characteristic of Fletcher's diction is his preference for the pronoun *ye* instead of *you*. This was pointed out by Mr. R. B. McKerrow, who in his edition of *The Spanish Curate*[1] notes that in the scenes generally attributed, in accordance with

[1] *Variorum, B. and F.*, Vol. II, 1905.

other tests, to Fletcher, *ye* occurs 271 times, while in the scenes attributed to Massinger it occurs but four. That is to say, for every *ye* in Fletcher's part there are but 0.65 *you's;* for every *ye* in Massinger's part, 50 *you's.* Mr. W. W. Greg, applying the test in his edition of *The Elder Brother,*[1] and counting the *y'are's* as instances of *ye,* finds that the percentage of *ye's* to *you's* in Fletcher's part is almost three times as high as in Massinger's. In a recent article in *The Nation*[2] Mr. Paul Elmer More communicates his independent observation of the same mannerism in Fletcher. Though he has been anticipated in part, his study adds to McKerrow's the valuable information that Fletcher uses the *ye* for *you* in "both numbers and cases, and in both serious and comic scenes." Mr. More's statistics favour the conclusion that the test distinguishes Fletcher not only from Massinger, but from other collaborators: Middleton, Rowley, Field, Jonson, Tourneur. They do not carry conviction regarding Shakespeare, whose habit as Greg and others had already announced varies in a perplexing manner. Nor does Mr. More arrive at any definite result concerning the test "when applied to the mixed work of Beaumont and Fletcher." For though the high percentage of *ye's* in the third and fourth of the *Foure Playes* confirms the general attribution of those 'Triumphs' to Fletcher, the low percentage in the first two 'Triumphs' does not justify "the common opinion which attributes them to Beaumont." Their author, as I have elsewhere stated, was probably Field.

[1] *Variorum, B. and F.,* Vol. II, 1905.
[2] New York, Nov. 14, 1912.

"In the plays which are units," continues Mr. More, "such as *The Maid's Tragedy, Philaster, A King and No King, The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* and *The Coxcomb,* this mark of Fletcher does not occur at all. It should seem that the writing here, at least in its final form, was almost entirely Beaumont's." I have gone through all the plays which have been ordinarily regarded as joint-productions of Beaumont and Fletcher, and find that in this surmise Mr. More is right. *The Knight,* to be sure, is Beaumont's alone; but with regard to the other four plays mentioned above, in which they undoubtedly coöperated, the suggestion that the writing, at least in its final form, was almost entirely Beaumont's, because of the practically complete absence of *ye's,* is justified by the facts. It is, also, helpful in the examination of plays not mentioned in this list. It has, in connection with other considerations, assisted me to the conclusion that Fletcher went over two or three scenes of *The Woman-Hater,* stamping them with his *ye's* after Beaumont had finished it as a whole; and it has confirmed me in the belief that *The Scornful Ladie* was one of the latest joint-plays, only partly revised by Beaumont,— and that, not long before his death. Fletcher's preference for *ye* is a distinctive mannerism. His usage varies from the employment of one-third as many *ye's* to that of twice as many *ye's* as *you's;* whereas Beaumont rarely uses a *ye.* Even more distinctive is Fletcher's use of *y'are,* and of *ye* in the objective case. The latter, Beaumont does not tolerate.

For figurative purposes Fletcher finds material

most frequently in the phenomena of winter and storm: 'frosts,' 'nipping frosts,' 'nipping winds,' 'hail,' 'cakes of ice,' 'icicles,' 'thaw,' 'tempests,' 'thunders,' 'billows,' 'mariners' and 'storm-tossed barks,' 'wild overflows' of waters in stream or torrent; in the phenomena of heat and light: 'suns,' the 'icy moon,' the 'Dog-star' or the 'Dog,' the 'Sirian star,' the 'cold Bear' and 'raging Lion,' 'Aetna,' 'fire and flames'; of trees: root and branch, foliage and fruit; of the oak and clinging vine; of the rose or blossom and the 'destroying canker'; of fever and ague; of youth and desire, and of Death 'beating larums to the blood,' of our days that are 'marches to the grave,' and of our lives 'tedious tales soon forgotten.' I have elsewhere called attention to the numerous variations which he plays upon the 'story of a woman.' His 'monuments' are in frequent requisition and, by preference, they 'sweat'; men pursued by widows fear to be 'buried alive in another man's cold monument.' Other common images are 'rock him to another world,' 'bestride a billow,' 'plough up the sea.' He indulges in extended mythological tropes as of the 'Carthage queen' and Ariadne; is especially attracted by Adonis, Hylas (whom he may have got either from Theocritus or the Marquis D'Urfé's Astræan character), and Hercules; and, in general, he levies more freely than Beaumont on commonplace classical material. In his unassisted dramas his fondness for personification seems to grow: many pages are thick with capitalized abstractions; and the poetry, then, is usually limited to the capitalization. The curious reader will find most

of Fletcher's predilections in image-making clustered in three or four typical passages of the later and unassisted plays, such as Alphonso's raving in *A Wife for a Month,* IV, 4; and in passages, undoubtedly of his verse and diction, in plays written conjointly with Beaumont, such as that of Spaconia's outburst in *King and No King,* IV, 2, 45–62.

Fletcher abounds in optatives: 'Would Gods thou hadst been so blest!' 'Would there were any safety in thy sex!' and the like. He is also given to rhetorical interrogations and elaborate exclamations; more so than Beaumont. He affects the lighter kind of oath, the appeal to something sacred, in attestation — 'Witness Heaven!' In entreaty —'High Heaven, defend us!' Or in mere ejaculation —'Equal Heavens!' He varies his asseverations so that they appear less bluntly profane: 'By my life!' 'By those lights, I vow!'— or more appropriate to the emergency: 'By all holy in Heaven and Earth!' He swears occasionally 'By the Gods,' but not so frequently as Beaumont, for there was a puritanical reaction after Beaumont's death. In the early joint-plays he affects particularly 'all the gods,' 'By *all* those gods, you swore by!' 'By more than all the gods!' In his imprecations he is even more sulphurous than Beaumont: 'Hell bless you for it!' 'Hell take me then!' 'Thou all-sin, all-hell, and last all-devils!'

In summary let us say of Fletcher's diction, that its vocabulary is repetitious; its sentence-structure, loose, cumulative, trailing: that its larger movement is, in general, dramatic, conversational, abrupt, rather than lyrical, declamatory, reflective. He writes for the

plot — forward: not from the character — outward. When he bestows a lyrical or descriptive touch upon the narrative it is always incidental to conversation or stage business. When he indulges in a classical reminiscence he permits himself to embroider and bedizen; but usually his ribbons (from a scantly furnished, much-rummaged wardrobe) are carelessly pinned on. While capable, especially in tragedy, of occasional long speeches, he prefers the brief interchange of utterance, the rapid fire and spasm of dialogue.

CHAPTER XX

FLETCHER'S MENTAL HABIT

FROM the study of Fletcher's unaided plays we arrive at a still further criterion for the determination of his share in the joint-plays,— his stock of ideas concerning life, his view of the spectacle, and his emotional attitude. His early pastoral comedy *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* might be dismissed from consideration as a conventionalized literary treatment of conditions remote from actual experience, were it not that other dramatic exponents of shepherds and shepherdesses — Jonson, for instance, and Milton — have succeeded in imbuing the pastoral species with qualities distinctly vital; the former, with rustic reality and genuine tenderness; the latter, with profound moral significance. *The Faithfull Shepheardesse,* on the other hand, with all its beauty of artistic form is devoid of reality, pathos, and sublimity. The author has no ideas worthy of the name and, in spite of his singing praises of chastity, he has his hand to his mouth where between fyttes there blossoms a superb smile. He has in art no depth of conviction; consequently, no philosophy of life to offer. *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* strikes the intellectual keynote of all Fletcher's unaided work. He is a playwright of marvellous skill, a lyrist of facile verse and fancy, but a poet of indifference — of no ethical insight or

outlook when he is purveying for the public. His tragedies, for instance *Valentinian* and *Bonduca* (the two scenes of the latter that may not be his are negligible), abound in sudden fatal passions and noble diction. They involve moral conduct, to be sure, patriotism, loyalty, chivalry, military prowess, insane lust and vengeance, but they lack deep-seated and deliberate motive of action, and they fail of that inevitability of spiritual conflict which is requisite to a tragic effect. The heroes of these, and of his tragicomedies and romantic dramas, such as *A Wife for a Month, The Loyall Subject, The Humorous Lieutenant, The Pilgrim, The Island Princesse,* may be fearless and blameless, but their courage and virtue are of habit rather than of moral exigency. Their loyalty is frequently unreasonable and absurdly exaggerated. One or two of his virtuous heroines are at once charming and real; but as a rule with Fletcher — the more virtuous, the more nebulous. His villains have no redeeming touch of humanity: their doom moves us not; nor does their sleight-of-hand repentance convince us. The atmosphere is histrionic. There is scorn of Fate and Fortune, much talk of death and the grave: and we "go out like tedious tales forgotten"; or we don't,— just as may suit the stage hangings, the brilliance of the footlights, and the sentimental uptake. There is, in short, in his unassisted serious dramas little real pathos; little of the grandeur and sudden imaginative splendour which, we shall see, characterized Beaumont; none of Beaumont's earnestness and philosophical spontaneity and profundity.

Like the tragicomic plays, Fletcher's lighter comedies, *The Chances, The Mad Lover, The Wild-Goose Chase, Women Pleased,* escape a moral catastrophe by walking round the issue. The heroes are amorous gallants, irresponsible adventurers, adroit scapegraces, devil-may-care rapier-tongued egoists and opportunists. The heroines are "not made for cloisters"; when they are not already as conscienceless as the heroes, in performance or desire, they are airy lasses, resourceful in love, seeming-virtuous but suspiciously well-informed of the tarnished side of the shield,—always witty. Fletcher *can* portray the innocence and constancy of woman; but he rarely takes the pains. "To be as many creatures as a woman" is for him a comfortable jibe. The charm of romantic character and subtly thickening complication did not much attract him.

He sets over in contrast the violent, insane, tragic, or pathetic with the ludicrous or grotesque; he indulges a careless, loose-jointed, adventitious humour. That he could, on occasion, avail himself of the laughter of burlesque is abundantly proved by the utterances of his Valentine in *Wit without Money,* the devices of the inimitable Maria in *The Tamer Tamed,* and of the *Humorous Lieutenant.* But for that comic irony of issues by which the wilful or pretentious or deluded,—foes or fools of convention and born prey of ridicule,—are satisfactorily readjusted to society, he prefers to substitute hilarity, ribaldry, the clash of wits, the battledore and shuttlecock of trick, intrigue, of shifting group and kaleidoscopic situation. The idiosyncrasies of the crowd delight him; but the more actual,

the more boisterous and bestial. His populace feeds upon "opinions, errors, dreams."

His facile verse and limpid dialogue flash with fancy. The gaiety of gilded youth ripples down the page; but the more clever, the more irrelevant the swirling jest,—and, to say the least, the more indelicate. Life is a bagatelle; its most strenuous interest — love; and love is volatile as it is sudden. The attitude of sex toward sex is as obvious to the level-headed animal, who is cynic in brain and hedonist in blood, as its significance is supreme: it is that of the man-or-woman hunt; the outcome, a jocosity, more or less, — whether of fornication or cuckoldry, or of tame, old-fashioned, matrimonial monochrome.

These characteristics of the Fletcherian habit mark all the author's independent plays from *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* of 1607 or 1608 to *Rule a Wife* of 1624. The man himself, I think, was better than the dramaturgic artist catering to the public market. For his personal, nay noble, ideals, let the reader turn to the poem appended to *The Honest Mans Fortune,* and judge. The characteristics sketched above are of the maker of a mimic world. Since I have elsewhere discussed them in full,[1] and the marvellous success that the dramaturge achieved in Shakespeare's Globe, this brief enumeration must suffice. Fletcher's mental habit affords an additional criterion for the determination of authorship in the unquestioned Beaumont-Fletcher plays, and in the analysis of plays in which the collaboration of the poets has been conjectured but not so fully attested.

[1] *The Fellows and Followers of Shakespeare* (Part Two) in *Representative English Comedies,* Vol. III.

CHAPTER XXI

BEAUMONT'S DICTION

FROM a consideration of Beaumont's work in his poems, in his *Maske* and *Woman-Hater,* and such portions of the three unquestioned Beaumont-Fletcher plays as are marked by his idiosyncrasies of versification, we may arrive at conclusions concerning his diction, rhetorical and poetic.

1. Rhetorical Peculiarities in General.

Beaumont's frequent use in prose of the enclitics 'do' and 'did' has been observed by students of his style. The same peculiarity marks his verse, and occasionally enables the reader to determine the authorship of passages where the metrical tests are inconclusive. His rhetoric is sometimes of the repetitive order, but, as Oliphant has indicated, rather for ends of word-play and irony than for mere expansion as with Fletcher. Such, for instance, is the ironical repetition of a speaker's words by his interlocutor. I note also a tendency to purely dramatic quotation, not common in Fletcher's writing,— *e. g.,* in *The Woman-Hater:* "Lisping cry 'Good Sir!' and he's thine own"; or "Every one that does not know, cries 'What nobleman is that?'"— and in *A King and No King* "That hand was never wont to draw a sword, But

it cried 'Dead' to something." This test alone, if we had not others of rhetoric and metre, would go far to deciding the respective contributions of our authors to the personality of Captain Bessus in the latter play. The Bessus of the first three acts, undoubtedly Beaumont's, is resonant with such cries and conversational citations; the Bessus of the last two, in a rôle almost as extensive, uses the device but once. Beaumont sometimes indulges in enumerative sentences; but the enumerations are generally in prose and (it will be recalled that he was a member of the Inner Temple) of a mock-legal character, not mere redundancies of detail such as we find in Fletcher. Among other peculiarities of expression is his frequent employment of 'ha' as an interrogative interjection.

2. Stock Words, Phrases, and Figures.

Beaumont is especially fond of the following words and phrasal variations: — The 'basilisk' with his 'deaddoing eye,' 'venom,' 'infect,' 'infection' and 'infectious,' 'corrupt,' 'leprosy,' 'vild,' 'crosses' (for 'misfortunes'), 'crossed' and 'crossly matched,' 'perplex,' 'distracted,' 'starts' (for 'surprises' and 'fitful changes'), 'miseries,' 'griefs,' 'garlands,' 'cut,' 'shoot,' 'dissemble,' 'loathed,' 'salve' (as noun and verb), 'acquaint' and 'acquaintance,' to 'article,' 'pull,' 'piece,' 'frail' and 'frailty,' 'mortal' and 'mortality,' 'fate' and 'destiny,' to 'blot' from earth or memory, 'after-ages,' 'instruments' (for 'servants'). Of his repeated use of 'hills,' 'caves,' 'mines,' 'seas,' 'thunder,' 'beast,' 'bull,' we shall

have further exemplification when we consider his figures of speech.

He is forever playing phrasal variations upon the words 'piece,' and 'little.' The former is a mannerism of the day, already availed of by Shakespeare in *Lear*, 'O ruined piece of nature,' and frequently in *Antony and Cleopatra*, and later repeated in the *Tempest* and *Winter's Tale*. So with Beaumont, Arethusa is a 'poor piece of earth'; 'every maid in love will have a piece' of Philaster; Oriana is a 'precious piece of sly damnation,' 'that pleasing piece of frailty we call woman.' Or the word is used literally for 'limb': — 'I 'll love those pieces you have cut away.' — Beaumont, I may say in passing, delights in cutting bodies 'into motes,' and sending 'limbs through the land.' — 'Little' he affects, making it pathetic and even more diminutive in conjunction with 'that': Euphrasia would 'keep that little piece I hold of life.' 'It is my fate,' proclaims Amintor,

> To bear and bow beneath a thousand griefs
> To keep that little credit with the world;

and so, 'that little passion,' 'that little training,' 'these little wounds,' *ad libitum*. Somewhat akin is the poet's use of 'kind': 'a kind of love in her to me'; 'a kind of healthful joy.' His heroines good and bad are given to introspection: they have 'acquaintance' with themselves. 'After you were gone,' says Bellario, 'I grew acquainted with my heart'; and Bacha in *Cupid's Revenge* in a scene undoubtedly of Beaumont's verse 'loathes' herself and is 'become

another woman; one, methinks, with whom I want acquaintance.'

While Beaumont makes occasional use of simile, his figures of poetry, or tropes, are generally of the more creative kind,— metaphor, personification, metonymy, — and these are very often heightened into that figure of logical artifice known as hyperbole. His comparisons deal in a striking degree with elemental phenomena: hills, caves, stones, rocks, seas, winds, flames, thunder, cold, ice, snow; or they are reminiscential of country life. In each play some hero declaims of 'the only difference betwixt man and beast, my reason'; and inevitably enlarges upon the 'nature unconfined' of beasts, and illustrates by custom and passion of ram, goat, heifer, or bull — especially bull. When the bull of the pasture does not suffice, the bull of Phalaris charges in. But Beaumont prefers nature: his images are sweet with April and violets and dew and morning-light, or fields of standing corn 'moved with a stiff gale'— their heads bowing 'all one way.' From the manufacture of books he borrows two metaphors, 'printing' and 'blotting,' and plies them with effective variety: Philaster 'prints' wounds upon Bellario; Bellario 'printed' her 'thoughts in lawn'; Amintor will 'print a thousand wounds' upon Evadne's flesh; and Nature wronged Panthea 'To print continual conquest on her cheeks And make no man worthy for her to take.' With similar frequency recur 'blotted from earth,' 'blotted from memory,' 'this third kiss blots it out.'

The younger poet personifies abstractions as frequently as Fletcher, but in a more poetic way. He

vitalizes grief and guilt and memory with figurative verbs — 'shoot,' 'grow,' 'cut.' 'I feel a grief shoot suddenly through all my veins' cries Amintor; and again 'Thine eyes shoot guilt into me.' 'I feel a sin growing upon my blood' shudders Arbaces. Philaster will 'cut off falsehood while it springs'; Amintor welcomes the hand that should 'cut' him from his sorrows; and Evadne confesses that her sin is 'tougher than the hand of Time can cut from man's remembrance.' Similar metaphorical constructions abound, such as 'pluck me back from my entrance into mirth,' in one of Leucippus' speeches in Beaumont's part of *Cupid's Revenge;* and in a speech of Melantius 'I did a deed that plucked five years from time' in *The Maides Tragedy.* Personified grief and sorrow are frequently in the plural with Beaumont: —'Nothing but a multitude of walking griefs.' It is a mistake to suppose, as some do, that passages written in Beaumont's metrical style are not by him if they abound in personification. Hunger, black Despair, Pride, Wantonness, figure in his verse in *The Woman-Hater;* Chance, Death, and Fortune in *The Knight;* Death, Victory, and Friendship, in *The Maides Tragedy;* Destiny, Falsehood, Mortality, Nature in *Philaster;* and so on.

No dramatist since the day of Kyd and Marlowe has more frequent or violent resort to hyperbole. His heroes call on 'seas to quench the fires' they 'feel,' and 'snows to quench their rising flames'; they will 'drink off seas' and 'yet have unquenched fires left' in their breasts; they 'wade through seas of sins'; they 'set hills on hills' and 'scale them all, and

from the utmost top fall' on the necks of foes, 'like thunder from a cloud'; or they 'discourse to all the underworld the worth' of those they love. 'From his iron den' they 'll 'waken Death, and hurl him' on lascivious kings. Arethusa's heart is 'mines of adamant to all the world beside,' but to her lover 'a lasting mine of joy'; her breath 'sweet as Arabian winds when fruits are ripe'; her breasts 'two liquid ivory balls.' Evadne will sooner 'find out the beds of snakes,' and 'with her youthful blood warm their cold flesh' than accede to Amintor's desires. 'The least word' that Panthea speaks 'is worth a life.' 'The child, this present hour brought forth to see the world, has not a soul more pure' than Oriana's. In one of Beaumont's verse-scenes of *The Coxcombe,* Ricardo, reinstated in his Viola's esteem, would have some woman 'take an everlasting pen' into her hand, 'and grave in paper more lasting than the marble monuments' the matchless virtues of women to posterities. And as for Bellario's worth to Philaster,—

> 'T is not the treasure of all Kings in one,
> The wealth of Tagus, nor the rocks of pearl
> That pave the court of Neptune, can weigh down
> That virtue.

Echoes not of Kyd and Marlowe only, but of Shakespeare from *Romeo* to *Hamlet* and *Macbeth,* reverberate in the magniloquent hyperbole of Beaumont.

Beaumont has more ejaculations than Fletcher, but fewer optatives. He is chary of rhetorical questions, and his exclamations run by preference into some fig-

ured hyperbole. He appeals less frequently than Fletcher to 'all the gods,' but very often to 'the gods,' 'good gods,' 'ye gods,' 'some god.' He refers, in conformity with his deterministic view of life, with particular preference to the 'just gods,' the 'powers that must be just,' the 'powers above,' 'ye better powers,' 'Heaven and the powers divine,' 'you heavenly powers,' the 'powers that rule us'; and all these he uses in attestation. An oath distinctive of him is 'By my vexèd soul!' In his hyperboles, Hell and devils play their part; but not in oath so frequently as with Fletcher.

3. Lines of Inevitable Poetry.

Similarly noticeable is Beaumont's faculty for 'simple poetic phrasing.' The elevated passion, the sudden glory,—and the large utterance of brief sentence and single verse, have been remarked by critics from his contemporary, John Earle, who wrote in commendation:

> Such strength, such sweetness couched in every line,
> Such life of fancy, such high choice of brain,

down to G. C. Macaulay, Herford, and Alden of the present day. No reader, even the most cursory, can fail to be impressed by the completeness of that one line (in his lament for Elizabeth Sidney),

> Sorrow can make a verse without a Muse,—

by the 'unassuming beauty' of Viola's loneliness (in his subplot of *The Coxcombe*),

All things have cast me from 'em but the earth.
The evening comes, and every little flower
Droops now as well as I;—

by the sublimity of those few words to the repentant lover,

All the forgiveness I can make you is to love you;—

by the superb simplicity of Bellario's scorn of life, in *Philaster,*

'T is but a piece of childhood thrown away,

and the finality of her definition of death (which, as if in premonition of his too sudden fate, is characteristic of Beaumont),—

'T is less than to be born; a lasting sleep;
A quiet resting from all jealousy,
A thing we all pursue; I know, besides,
It is but giving over of a game
That must be lost;—

by the pathetic irony of Aspatia's farewell to love in *The Maides Tragedy,*

So with my prayers I leave you, and must try
Some yet-unpractis'd way to grieve and die;

and the heroism (in *Cupid's Revenge,* the final scene, undoubtedly of Beaumont's verse) of Urania's confession to Leucippus,

I would not let you know till I was dying;
For you could not love me, my mother was so naught;

by Panthea's cry of horror, in *A King and No King,*

I feel a sin growing upon my blood;

and by those flashes of incomparable verity that intensify the gloom of *The Maides Tragedy:* Amintor's

Those have most power to hurt us, that we love;
We lay our sleeping lives within their arms;

and after Evadne's death,

My soul grows weary of her house, and I
All over am a trouble to myself;—

by the wounded Aspatia's

I shall sure live, Amintor, I am well;
A kind of healthful joy wanders within me;

and her parting whisper,

Give me thy hand; mine eyes grope up and down,
And cannot find thee.

This is Nature sobbing into verse: the unadorned poetry of the human heartbreak. Where other than in Shakespeare do we find among the Jacobean poets such verse?

That a style of this kind should be rich in apothegm is not surprising. Instances rare in wisdom and phrasal conciseness are to be encountered on every other page of Beaumont.

It may, in short, be said of this dramatist's rhetorical and poetic diction, that, while the vocabulary may not be more varied, it is more intimate, musical, and reverberant than Fletcher's; that the periods, though

sometimes appropriately syncopated and parenthetically broken, as in dramatic conversation, are, in rhapsodical and descriptive passages, both complex and balanced of structure,— pregnant of ideas labouring for expression rather than enumerative; that they echo Shakespeare's grandeur of phrase, with its involution, crowding of illustration and fresh insistent thought, in a degree utterly foreign to the rhetoric of Fletcher; and that his brief sentences are marked by a direct and final resplendence and simplicity.

In the larger movements of composition the purely poetic quality predominates over the narrative, dramatic or conversational. This characteristic is especially noticeable in declamatory speeches and soliloquies; sometimes idyllic as in Philaster's description of Bellario,—"I found him sitting by a fountain's side,"— or in the well-known "Oh that I had been nourished in these woods with milk of goats and acorns"; often operatic, as in Aspatia's farewells to Amintor and to love; always lyrical, imaginatively surcharged. Beaumont's figures of rhetoric when not hyperbolic, are picturesquely natural; his poetic tropes are creative, vitalizing. His speakers are self-revelatory: expressive of temperament, emotion, reflection. Their utterances are frequently descriptive, picturesquely loitering, rather than, by way of dialogue, framed to further the action alone. And yet, when they will, their conversation is spontaneous, fragmentary, and abrupt, intensifying the dramatic situation; not simply, as with Fletcher, by giving opportunity for stage-business, but by differencing the motive that underlies the action.

CHAPTER XXII

BEAUMONT'S MENTAL HABIT

FROM passages in the indubitable metrical manner and rhetorical style of Beaumont we pass to a still further test by which to determine his share in doubtful passages — I mean his stock of ideas. Critics have long been familiar with the determinism of his philosophy of life. His Arethusa in *Philaster* expresses it in a nutshell:

> If destiny (to whom we dare not say,
> Why didst thou this?) have not decreed it so,
> In lasting leaves (whose smallest characters
> Was never altered yet), this match shall break.—

We are ignorant of the 'crosses of our births.' Nature 'loves not to be questioned, why she did this or that, but has her ends, and knows she does well.' "But thou," cries the poet,—

> But thou hadst, ere thou knew'st the use of tears,
> Sorrow laid up against thou cam'st to years.

'Tis the gods, 'the gods, that make us so.' They would not have their 'dooms withstood, whose holy wisdoms make our passions the way unto their justice.' And 'out of justice we must challenge nothing.' The gods reward, the gods punish: 'I am a man and dare

not quarrel with divinity . . . and you shall see me bear my crosses like a man.' It is the 'will of Heaven'; 'a decreed instant cuts off every life, for which to mourn is to repine.' [1]

Similarly familiar is Beaumont's recurrent doctrine of the divinity of kings. "In that sacred word," says his Amintor of *The Maides Tragedy*,—

> In that sacred word
> 'The King,' there lies a terror: what frail man
> Dares lift his hand against it? Let the gods
> Speak to him when they please; till when let us
> Suffer and wait.

And again, to the monarch who has wronged him,

> There is
> Divinity about you, that strikes dead
> My rising passions; as you are my King
> I fall before you, and present my sword
> To cut mine own flesh, if it be your will.

Of 'the breath of kings' Beaumont's fancy constructs ever new terrors: it is 'like the breath of gods'; it may blow men 'about the world.' But when a king is guilty, though he may boast that his breath 'can still the winds, uncloud the sun, charm down the swelling floods, and stop the floods of heaven,' some honest man is always to be found to say 'No; nor' can thy 'breath smell sweet itself if once the lungs be but corrupted.' Though the gods place kings 'above the rest, to be served, flattered, and adored,' kings may not 'article with the gods'—

[1] Elegy on the Countess of Rutland.

On lustful kings
Unlooked-for sudden deaths from Heaven are sent;
But curs'd is he that is their instrument.

Of 'this most perfect creature, this image of his Maker, well-squared man' Beaumont philosophizes much. Again and again he reminds us that 'the only difference betwixt man and beast is reason.' In the moment of guilty passion his Arbaces of *A King and No King* cries:

Accursèd man!
Thou bought'st thy reason at too dear a rate,
For thou hast all thy actions bounded in
With curious rules, when every beast is free."

And, in the moment of jealousy, Philaster laments,

Oh, that, like beasts, we could not grieve ourselves
With that we see not!

Beaumont knows of no natural felicity or liberty more to be envied than that of the beast; and of no opprobrium more vile than that which likens man to lustful beast, or 'worse than savage beast.'

He is impressed with the frailty of mankind and the brevity of life: 'Frail man' and 'transitory man' fell readily from his lips who was to die so young. He emphasizes the objective quality of evil: "Good gods, tempt not a frail man!" prays Philaster; and Arbaces struggling against temptation: "What art thou, that dost creep into my breast; And dar'st not see my face?" Once temptation has taken root, it grows insidiously: Panthea "feels a sin growing upon her blood"; and Arbaces moralizes

> There is a method in man's wickedness
> It grows up by degrees.

It is natural, therefore, that Beaumont should frequently fall back upon 'conscience' and its 'sensibility.' And upon the efficacy of repentance. So Leucippus in Beaumont's portion of *Cupid's Revenge,* prays the gods to hold him back,—"Lest I add sins to sins, till no repentance will cure me." Arbaces finds repentance. Evadne knows that it is 'the best sacrifice.'

From this consciousness of uneasy greatness and frail mortality the poet seeks refuge in descriptions of pastoral life. His pictures of idyllic beauty and simplicity are too well-known to warrant repetition here: Bellario weaving garlands by the fountain's side; Philaster's rhapsody in the woods; Valerio's "Come, pretty soul, we now are near our home" to Viola in the *Coxcombe,* and Viola's "what true contented happiness dwells here, More than in cities!" The same conception marks as Beaumont's the shrewdly humorous conversation in prose between the citizens' wives in *A King and No King,* beginning —

> Lord, how fine the fields be! What sweet living 't is in the country! —
>
> Ay, poor souls, God help 'em, they live as contentedly as one of us.

Through the fourth act of *Philaster,* and wherever else Beaumont portrays the countryside or country men and women, there blows the fresh breeze of the Charnwood forest in his native Leicestershire.

But his most poetic themes are of the friendship of man for man, and of the 'whiteness' of women's innocence, the unselfishness of their love, their forgivingness, and the reverence due from men who so little understand them. "And were you not my King," protests the blunt Mardonius to his hasty lord, "I should have chose you out to love above the rest." "I have not one friend in the court but thou," says Prince Leucippus; and his devoted follower can only stammer "You know I love you but too well." In that fine summing up of Melantius to Amintor, one seems to hear Beaumont himself:

> The name of friend is more than family
> Or all the world besides.

With woman's purity his darkest pages are starred. She is 'innocent as morning light,' 'more innocent than sleep,' 'as white as Innocence herself.' 'Armed with innocence' a tender spotless maid 'may walk safe among beasts.' Her 'prayers are pure,' and she is 'fair and virtuous still to ages."[1] His fairest heroines are philosophers of 'the truth of maids and perjuries of men.' "All the men I meet are harsh and rude" says Aspatia,

> And have a subtilty in everything
> Which love could never know; but we fond women
> Harbour the easiest and the smoothest thoughts,
> And think all shall go so. It is unjust

[1] I cannot understand how so careful a scholar as Professor Schelling (*Engl. Lit. during Lifetime of Shakesp.*, 207) can attribute to him, from the hopelessly uncritical collection of Blaiklock, the poem entitled *The Indifferent*, and argue therefrom his "cynicism" concerning the constancy of woman.

That men and women should be match'd together.

His Viola of the *Coxcombe* continues the contention:

> Woman, they say, was only made of man
> Methinks 't is strange they should be so unlike;
> It may be, all the best was cut away
> To make the woman, and the naught was left
> Behind with him.

And the philosophy of Beaumont's love-lorn maidens she sums up in her conclusion:

> Scholars affirm the world 's upheld by love;
> But I believe women maintain all this,
> For there 's no love in men.

Deserted by her lover, she finds 'how valiant and how 'fraid at once, Love makes a virgin'; and, sought again by him repentant, she epitomizes the hearts of all Bellarios, Arethusas, Pantheas, Uranias:

> I will set no penance
> To gain the great forgiveness you desire,
> But to come hither, and take me and it . . .
> For God's sake, urge your faults no more, but mend!
> All the forgiveness I can make you, is
> To love you: which I will do, and desire
> Nothing but love again; which if I have not,
> Yet I will love you still.

All man can do in return for such long-suffering mercy is to revere: "How rude are all men that take the name of civil to ourselves" murmurs the reformed Ricardo; and then —

I do kneel because it is
An action very fit and reverent,
In presence of so pure a creature.

So kneels Arbaces; and so, in spirit, Philaster and Amintor.

Prayer is for Beaumont a very present aid. Of his women especially the 'vows' and 'oblations' are a poetic incense continually ascending. And closely akin to the prayerful innocence of tender maids is the pathos of their 'childhood thrown away.' Even his whimsical Oriana of *The Woman-Hater* can aver:

The child this present hour brought forth
To see the world has not a soul more pure,
More white, more virgin that I have.

The bitterest experiences of humanity are sprung from misapprehension,—"They have most power to hurt us that we love,"—or from jealousy, slander, unwarranted violence, unmerited pain. And for these the only solace is in death. About this truth Beaumont weaves a shroud of unsullied beauty, a poetry that has rarely been surpassed. In nearly all that he has left us the thought recurs; but nowhere better expressed than in those lines, already quoted in full from *Philaster,* where Bellario "knows what 'tis to die . . . a lasting sleep; a quiet resting from all jealousy." His Arethusa repeats the theme; but with a wistful incertitude:

I shall have peace in death
Yet tell me this: there will be no slanders,
No jealousy in the other world; no ill there?

"No," replies her unjustly suspicious lover.—And she:—"Show me, then, the way!" No kinder mercy to the tempted, misconceived heir of mortality has been vouchsafed than to 'suffer him to find his quiet grave in peace.' So think Panthea and Arbaces; and so his Urania and Leucippus find. And so the poet closes that rare elegy to his belovèd Countess of Rutland:

> I will not hurt the peace which she should have,
> By longer looking in her quiet grave.

But still more powerful in its blessing than 'sleep' and the 'peace' of the 'quiet grave,' and more fearful in its bane than the penalties of hell,—one reality persists—the award of 'after-ages.' Bellario would not reveal what she has learned, to make her life 'last ages.' Philaster's highest praise for Arethusa is "Thou art fair and virtuous still to ages." "Kill me," says Amintor to Evadne,—

> Kill me; all true lovers, that shall live
> In after-ages crossed in their desires,
> Shall bless thy memory.

Ricardo of the *Coxcombe* would have some woman 'grave in paper' their 'matchless virtues to posterities.' Even the mock-romantic Jasper in the *Knight* (which I am sure is all Beaumont) will try his sweetheart's love 'that the world and memory may sing to after-times her constancy.' As to evil, it meets its punishment both in heredity and in the verdict of generations yet to come. "I see," soliloquizes the usurping King in a passage already quoted from *Philaster:*

You gods, I see that who unrighteously
Holds wealth or state from others shall be cursed
In that which meaner men are blest withal:
Ages to come shall know no male of him
Left to inherit, and his name shall be
Blotted from earth; if he have any child
It shall be crossly matched.

"Show me the way," cries Arbaces to his supposed mother, and thinking of heredity, "to the inheritance I have by thee, which is a spacious world Of impious acts." And Amintor warns Evadne: "Let it not rise up for thy shame and mine To after-ages. . . . We will adopt us sons; The virtue shall inherit and not blood." "May all ages," prays the lascivious Bacha in *Cupid's Revenge,* "May all ages,"—

That shall succeed curse you as I do! and
If it be possible, I ask it, Heaven,
That your base issues may be ever monstrous,
That must for shame of nature and succession,
Be drowned like dogs!

So, *passim,* in Beaumont—'lasting to ages in the memory of this damnèd act'; 'a great example of their justice to all ensuing ages.'

CHAPTER XXIII

THE AUTHORSHIP OF THREE DISPUTED PLAYS

WITH the tests which have thus been described we are equipped for an examination of the plays written before 1616, which have, in these latter days, been with some show of evidence regarded as the joint-production of the "two wits and friends." [1]

[1] To employ in this process of separation the characteristics of Fletcher's later dramatic technique as a criterion does not appear to me permissible. For these, however, the reader may consult Miss Hatcher's *John Fletcher, A Study on Dramatic Method,* and sections 15 and 16 of my essay on *The Fellows and Followers of Shakespeare,* Part Two, *Rep. Eng. Com.,* Vol. III, now in press. The technique is more likely to change than the versification, the style, the mental habit. Its later characteristics may, some of them, have been derived from the association with Beaumont; or they may be of Fletcher's maturer development under different influences and conditions. It is fair to cite them as corroborative evidence in the process of separation, only when they are in continuance of Fletcher's earlier idiosyncrasy. I have, also, refrained from complicating the present discussion by analysis of the style of Massinger, for which see Fleay, *N. S. S. Trans.,* 1874, *Shakesp. Manual,* 1876, *Engl. Studien,* 1885–1886, and *Chron. Eng. Dram.,* 1891; Boyle, *Engl. Studien,* 1881-1887, and *N. S. S. Trans.,* 1886; Macaulay, *Francis Beaumont,* 1883; Oliphant, *Engl. Studien,* 1890-1892; Thorndike, *Infl. of B. and F.,* 1901; and section 16 of my essay mentioned above. There is no proof of Massinger's dramatic activity before July 1613, nor of his coöperation with Fletcher until after that date, *i. e.,* after Beaumont's virtual cessation. He may have revised some of Beaumont's lines and scenes; but Beaumont's style is too well defined to be confused with that of Massinger or of any other reviser; or of an imitator, such as Field.

While attempting to separate the composition of one author from that of the other, we may determine the dramatic peculiarities of each during the course of the partnership, and obtain a fairly definite basis for an historical and literary appreciation of the plays, individually considered.

1.—Of the *Foure Playes, or Morall Representations, in One* (first published as by Beaumont and Fletcher in the folio of 1647, but without indication of first performance or of acting company), the last two, *The Triumph of Death* and *The Triumph of Time,* are, according to the verse tests, undoubtedly Fletcher's and have been assigned to him by all critics. *The Triumph of Death* is studded with alliterations and with repetitions of the effective word:

> Oh I could curse
> And crucify myself for childish doting
> Upon a face that feeds not with fresh figures
> Every fresh hour;

and with triplets:

> What new body
> And new face must I make me, with new manners;

and with the resonant "all":

> Make her all thy heaven,
> And all thy joy, for she is all thy happiness;

and with Fletcher's favourite words and his nouns in apposition, rhetorical questions, afterthoughts, verbal enumerations, and turgid exposition. The same may be said of *The Triumph of Time.* As there is less

of the redundant epithet than in *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* (1609), but more than in *Philaster* (before July 12, 1610), I am of the opinion that Fletcher's contribution to the *Triumphs* falls chronologically between those plays. As Fletcher matures he prunes his adjectives.

The rest of these *Morall Representations* display neither the verse nor the rhetoric of Fletcher. On the basis of verse-tests Boyle assigns them to Beaumont. Macaulay says, "probably,"—and adds the *Induction*. But Oliphant, taking into consideration also the rhetorical and dramatic qualities, gives the *Induction* and *The Triumph of Honour* to a third author, Nathaniel Field, and only *The Triumph of Love* to Beaumont. As to the *Induction* and *The Triumph of Honour* I agree with Oliphant. They are full of polysyllabic Latinisms such as Field uses in his *Woman is a Weather-cocke* (entered for publication November 23, 1611) and Beaumont never uses: 'to participate affairs,' 'torturous engine,' etc.; and they are marked by simpler Fieldian expressions 'wale,' 'gyv'd,' 'blown man,' 'miskill,' 'vane,' 'lubbers,' 'urned,' and a score of others not found anywhere in Beaumont's undoubted writings. A few words, like 'basilisk' and 'loathed' suggest Beaumont, as does the verse; but this may be explained by vogue or imitation. Field was two or three years younger than Beaumont, and had played as a boy actor in one or more of the early Beaumont and Fletcher productions. His *Woman is a Weathercocke* and his *Amends for Ladies* indicate the influence of Beaumont in matters of comic invention,

poetic hyperbole, burlesque and pathos, as well as in metrical style. The *Honour* is a somewhat bombastic, puerile, magic-show written in manifest imitation of Beaumont's verse and rhetoric.

As to *The Triumph of Love,* I go further than Oliphant. I assign at least half of it, viz., scenes 1, 2, and 6, on the basis of diction, to Field. In scenes 3, 4, and 5, I find some trace of Beaumont's favourite expressions, of his thoughts of destiny and death and woman's tenderness, his poetic spontaneity, his sensational dramatic surprises; but I think these are an echo. The rural scene lacks his exquisite simplicity; and some of the words are not of his vocabulary. One is sorry to strike from the list of Beaumont's creations the pathetic and almost impressive figure of Violante. If it was originally Beaumont's, it is of his earlier work revamped by Field; if it is Field's, it is an echo simulating the voice, but missing the reality, of Beaumont's Aspatia, Bellario, Urania. This criticism holds true of both the Triumphs, *Love* and *Honour.*

The commonly accepted date, 1608, for the composition of the *Foure Playes in One* is derived from Fleay, who mistakenly quotes a reference in the 1619 quarto of *The Yorkshire Tragedy* to the *Foure Playes* as if it were of the 1608 quarto where the reference does not appear.[1] While Fletcher may have written the first draft of his contribution before the middle of 1610, it is evident from Field's Address *To the Reader* in the first quarto of the *Woman is a Weather-cocke*

[1] See Thorndike, *Infl. of B. and F.,* p. 85, for discussion and authorities.

(entered S. R., November 23, 1611), that Field's contribution was made after November 23, 1611. In that Address he makes it plain that this is his first dramatic effort: "I have been vexed with vile plays myself a great while, hearing many; now I thought to be even with some, and they should hear mine too." We have already noticed [1] that Field had not written even his *Weather-cocke,* still less anything in collaboration with Fletcher, at the time of the publication of *The Faithfull Shepheardesse* (between January and July, 1609); for in his complimentary poem for the quarto of that "Pastorall," Field acknowledges his unknown name and his Muse in swaddling clouts, and timidly confesses his ambition to write something like *The Shepheardesse,* "including a Morallitie, Sweete and profitable." That Field's contribution to the *Foure Playes* was not made before the date of the first performance of *The Weather-cocke* by the Revels' Children at Whitefriars, *i. e.,* January 4, 1610 to Christmas 1610–11 (when its presentation before the King at Whitehall probably took place), further appears from his dedication *To Any Woman that hath been no Weather-cocke* (quarto, 1611) in which he alludes not to *The Triumph of Honour,* or of *Love,* but to *Amends for Ladies,* as his "next play," then on the stocks, and, he thought, soon to be printed.[2] The evidence, external and internal, amply presented by Oliphant, Thorndike, and others, but with a view to conclusions different from mine as to date and authorship, confirms me in the belief that Fletcher's

[1] Chapter VI.

[2] It was not printed till 1618; but had been acted long before.

Time and *Death,* though written at least two years earlier, were not gathered up with Field's *Induction, Honour,* and *Love,* into the *Foure Playes in One* until about 1612; and that the series was performed at Whitefriars by Field's company of the Queen's Revels' Children, shortly after they had first acted *Cupid's Revenge* at the same theatre.

2.— Of the remaining ten plays in which, according to the historical evidence adduced by various critics, Beaumont could have collaborated, at least two furnish no material that can be of service for the estimation of his qualities. If *Love's Cure* was written as early as the date of certain references in the story, viz., 1605–1609, it is so overlaid by later alteration that whether, as the textual experts guess, it be Beaumont's revised by Massinger, or Fletcher's revised by Massinger and others, or Massinger and Middleton's, or Beaumont's with the assistance of Fletcher and revised by Massinger, Beaumont for us is indeterminate. Fleay, Oliphant, and others trace him in a few prose scenes, and in two or three of verse.[1] But where the rhetorical and dramatic manner occasionally suggest him, or the metre has somewhat of his stamp, words abound that I find in no work of his undisputed composition. The servant, Lazarillo, like him of Beaumont's *Woman-Hater,* is a glutton, but he does not speak Beaumont's language. The scenes ascribed to Beaumont reek with an excremental and sexual vulgarity to which Beaumont never condescended, unless for brief space, and when absolutely necessary for charac-

[1] II, 1, 2; III, 1, 3, 5; V, 3.

terization. And there is little, indeed, that bespeaks Fletcher. *Love's Cure* was first attributed to Beaumont and Fletcher at a "reviving of the play" after they were both dead; and it was not printed till 1647. It is not unlikely, as G. C. Macaulay holds, that the play was written by Massinger, in or after 1622.

3.— As to that comedy of prostitution, with occasional essays on the special charms of cuckoldry, *The Captaine* (acted in 1613, maybe as early as 1611, and by the King's Company) there is no convincing external proof of Beaumont's authorship. It is, on the contrary, assigned to Fletcher by one of his younger contemporaries, Hills, whose attributions of such authorship are frequently correct; and its accent throughout is more clearly that of Fletcher than of any other dramatist. The critics are agreed that it is not wholly his, however; and G. C. Macaulay in especial conjectures the presence of Massinger. The verse and prose of a few scenes [1] do not preclude the possibility of Beaumont's coöperation; but I find in them no vestige of his faith in sweet innocence; and in only one,— the awful episode (IV, 5), in which the Father seeks his wanton daughter in a house of shame and would kill her,— his imaginative elevation or his dramatic creativity.

[1] IV, 5; V, 2, 4, 5.

CHAPTER XXIV

"THE WOMAN-HATER," AND "THE KNIGHT"

FOUR.— *The Woman-Hater* was entered in the Stationers' Registers, May 20, 1607, and published in quarto (twice, with but slight variation) the same year "as lately acted by the Children of Paules." Of the date of composition, probably the spring of 1607, I have written in Chapter VI, above. There is no indication of authorship in either quarto; but the Prologue assigns it to a single author—"he that made this play." The quarto of 1648 prints it as "by J. Fletcher Gent"; that of 1649, as by Beaumont and Fletcher. The Prologue of 1649, however, written by D'Avenant for an undated revival of the play and addressed to the Ladies, definitely ascribes the authorship to one "poet," who "to the stars your sex did raise; for which, full twenty years he wore the bays." The "twenty years" can apply only to Fletcher.

In the lines which follow, D'Avenant has been supposed to credit the same author with the whole of *The Maides Tragedy, Philaster,* and *A King and No King* as well:

> 'T was he reduc'd Evadne from her scorn,
> And taught the sad Aspatia how to mourn;
> Gave Arethusa's love a glad relief;
> And made Panthea elegant in grief.

We now know, from the application of metrical and rhetorical tests, that but a small part of each of the plays here alluded to was written by Fletcher. If D'Avenant has attributed to Fletcher in these cases plays of which the larger part was written by Beaumont, he was but consistent in error when he ascribed to Fletcher *The Woman-Hater,* in which there is very little that betrays resemblance to Fletcher's style. If, on the other hand, D'Avenant in the verses quoted above intended to attribute to Fletcher merely individual scenes of *The Maides Tragedy,* etc., he must have had a knowledge of the respective authorship of the dramatists hardly to be reconciled with the palpable mistake of assigning *The Woman-Hater* to Fletcher. For, by an odd coincidence, he has indicated in the first and second verses two [1] of the five scenes of *The Maides Tragedy,* and in the third, two [2] of the five scenes of *Philaster* which our modern criticism has proved to be Fletcher's. The reference in the fourth line is more vague; but it has the merit of indicating the only scene of *A King and No King* [3] in which, according to our critical tests, Fletcher has contributed to the characterization of Panthea. With regard to *The Woman-Hater,* it would appear that D'Avenant was carelessly following the mistaken ascription of authorship on the title-page of the quarto of 1648.

Fleay, Boyle, Macaulay, and Ward, with but slight hesitation, pronounce *The Woman-Hater* to be an independent production of Beaumont, written while he was under the influence of Ben Jonson; but as I shall

[1] IV, 1; and II, 2. [2] V, 3, 4. [3] IV, 1.

presently show, Fletcher has revised a few scenes. Oliphant feels inclined to join the critics mentioned above, but cannot blind himself "to the presence of Fletcher in a couple of scenes." One of these is III, 1.[1] In the quartos this scene is divided into two. By the *ye* test the first half-scene, running to *Enter Duke, Etc.,* in which Oriana tempts Gondarino, would be Fletcher's (15 *ye's* to 9 *you's*); but the percentage of double endings is too low, and that of run-on lines too high for him. I think that he is revising Beaumont's original sketch. The second half-scene and the rest of the act are, by the *ye* test and all other criteria, Beaumont's. The metrical style of the act as a whole is Beaumont's; so also the enclitic 'do's' and 'did's,' the Beaumontesque 'basilisk,' 'dissemble,' the mock-heroic prayers, and mock-legal nicety of enumeration, the racy ironic prose, and the burlesque Shakespearian echoes—"That pleasing piece of frailty that we call woman," etc. The other passage doubtfully assigned to Fletcher, by Oliphant — forty lines following *Enter Ladies* in V, 5 (Dyce) — more closely resembles his manner of verse, but is not markedly of his rhetorical stamp. But by the *ye* test (24 *ye's* to 39 *you's*) the whole of that scene, opening *Enter Arigo and Oriana* is Fletcher's, or Fletcher's revision of Beaumont. So, also, by the *ye* test is another scene not before ascribed to Fletcher, IV, 2 (27 *ye's* to 25 *you's*), as far as *Enter Oriana and her Waiting-woman.* In this and the other *ye* scenes, the *ye* frequently occurs in the objective,— which is abso-

[1] Between *Oriana sits down* and *exit Oriana,* as in Dyce, Vol. I, pp. 43-48.

lute Fletcher. The rest of this scene, constituting two in the quartos, is pure Beaumont.— The play is, so far as we can determine, Beaumont's earliest attempt at dramatic production. Fletcher touched it up, and his revision shows in the scenes mentioned above; that is to say, in about sixteen out of the seventy pages as printed in the *Cambridge English Classics*.

The manifestly exaggerated torments of Gondarino "who will be a scourge to all females in his life," the amorous affectation of Oriana, the "stratagems and ambuscadoes" of the hungry courtier in his pursuit of "the chaste virgin-head" of a fish, the zealous stupidity of the intelligencers are, as we have already noted, of the humours school; and the work is that of a beginner. But the "humours" are flavoured with Beaumont's humanity; the mirth is his, genuine and rollicking. The satire is concrete; and the play as a whole, a promising precursor of the purple-flowered prickly pear, next to be considered,— also undoubtedly Beaumont's.

5.— Evidence, both external and internal, points to the production of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* between July 10, 1607 and some time in March 1608. Since the first quarto (1613) is anonymous, our earliest indication of authorship is that of the title-pages of the second and third (1635), which ascribe the play to Beaumont and Fletcher; and our next, the Cockpit list of 1639 where it is included in a sequence of five plays in which one or both had a hand.

The dedication of the first quarto speaks in one place of the "parents" of the play, and in others

of its "father"; and the address prefixed to the second quarto speaks of the "author." Critics when relying upon verse-tests think that they trace the hand of Fletcher in several scenes.[1] But in those scenes, even when the double-endings might indicate Fletcher, the frequency of rhymes, masculine and feminine, is altogether above his usage; the number of end-stopped lines is ordinarily below it; and the diction, save in one or two brief passages,[2] is his neither in vocabulary nor rhetorical device. The verse is singularly free from alliteration; and the prose, in which over a third of the play is written, displays that characteristic of Fletcher in only one speech,[3] and, there, with ludicrous intent. Though, on the other hand, the verse is in many respects different from that which Beaumont employed in his more stereotyped drama, it displays in several passages his acknowledged peculiarity in conjunction with a diction and manner of thought undoubtedly his. The prose is generally of a piece with that of his other comic writing, as in *The Woman-Hater* more especially; and the scenes of low life and the conversation are coloured by his rhetoric as we know them in *Philaster, A King and No King,* and *The Coxcombe.* Of the portrayal of humours, mock-heroic and burlesque, the same statements hold true. The verse of Jasper's soliloquy:[4]

[1] I, 1; I, 2; II, 2; II, 3; III, 1; IV, 4.

[2] *E. g.,* the "lets" and the "alls" of IV, 4, 36–40, as numbered in Alden's edition. The play is devoid of Fletcherian jolts.

[3] V, 2, 63, *et seq.*

[4] II, 2, 90.

> Now, Fortune, if thou beest not onely ill,
> Shew me thy better face, and bring about
> My desperate wheele, that I may clime at length
> And stand,—

is in the usual manner of Beaumont. Luce's lament, beginning:[1]

> Thou that art
> The end of all, and the sweete rest of all
> Come, come, ô, Death! bring me to thy peace,
> And blot out all the memory I nourish
> Both of my father and my cruell friend,—

and ending:

> How happy had I bene, if, being borne,
> My grave had bene my cradle!

has both the diction and the point of view of Beaumont; and its verse has not more of the double-endings than he sometimes uses. The subject and the mock-heroic purpose do not call for his usual dramatic vocabulary: but we recognize his 'dissemble,' his 'carduus' and 'phlebotomy' (compare *Philaster*), his 'eyes shoot me through,' his 'do's.' We recognize him in the frequent appeals to Chance and Fortune, in the sensational determination of Jasper to test Luce's devotion at the point of the sword, and in the series of sensational complications and dénouements which conclude the romantic plot. In short, I agree with the critics[2] who attribute the play, wholly or chiefly, to Beaumont. Fletcher may have inserted a few verses here and there; but there is nothing in sentiment, phrase, or artifice, to prove that he did.

[1] IV, 4, 5. [2] Macaulay, Oliphant, Bullen, and Alden.

The diversity of metrical forms is but an evidence of the ingenuity of Beaumont. He has used blank verse with frequent double-endings to distinguish the romantic characters and plot: as in the scenes between Venturewell and Jasper, Jasper and Luce. He has used the heroic couplet with rhymes, single and double, to distinguish the mock-romantic of Venturewell and Humphrey, Humphrey and Luce. For the mock-heroic of Ralph he has used the swelling ten-syllabled blank verse of Marlowe and Kyd, or the prose of *Amadis* and *Palmerin*; for his burlesque of the Maylord he has used the senarii of the antiquated interlude. For the conversation of the Merrythoughts and of the citizen-critics he has used plain prose; and for the tuneful ecstasies of Merrythought senior, a sheaf of ballads. This consideration alone,— that the metrical and prose forms are chosen with a view to the various purposes of the play,— should convince the reader of the vanity of assigning to Fletcher verse which evidently had its origin not in any of his proclivities, but in the temper of Beaumont's Venturewell, Jasper, and Luce.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle was written and first acted between June 29, 1607 and April 1, 1608. The upper limit is fixed, as Boyle has indicated,[1] by the mention, in Act IV, 1, 46, of an incident in *The Travails of Three English Brothers,* "let the Sophy of Persia come and christen him a childe," concerning which the 'Boy' remarks, 1, 48–50, "that will not do so well; 'tis stale; it has been had before at the Red Bull." The Red Bull, Clerkenwell, had been

[1] *Engl. Studien,* IX.

occupied by Queen Anne's Men (whose plays Beaumont is especially ridiculing), since 1604.[1] *The Travails* was written hurriedly by Day, Rowley, and Wilkins after the appearance, June 8, 1607, of a tract by Nixon, on the adventures of the three Shirleys, and was performed June 29, by the Queen's Men,[2] *The Travails* dealt with a matter of ephemeral interest, and would not long have held the public. It is, therefore, likely that the allusion to it in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* was written shortly after June 29. Since the play, according to its first publisher, took eight days to write, we cannot assign any date earlier than, say, July 10, 1607, for its first performance. The lower limit is determined by the certainty that *The Knight* was played by the Queen's Revels' Children at Blackfriars; and that they ceased to act there as an independent company some time in March 1608. The play belonged in 1639 to Beeston's Boys, who had it with four others of Beaumont and Fletcher from Queen Henrietta's Men. None of these five plays had ever been played by the King's Company; it is likely that they had come to the Queen Henrietta's from the Lady Elizabeth's Men with whom the Queen's Revels' Children had been amalgamated in 1613.[3] One of these plays, *Cupid's Revenge,* had certainly come down from the Queen's Revels' Boys in that way.

That the original performance was by a company of children appears from numerous passages in the

[1] Wallace, *Shakspere's Money Interest in the Globe, Cent. Maga.,* Aug., 1910, p. 510.
[2] Fleay, *Chr. Eng. Dr.,* II, 277.
[3] Fleay, *H. S.,* p. 356.

text; and the only other children's company available for consideration between 1603 and 1611, when the manuscript fell into the publisher's hands, is that of the Paul's Boys. That the Paul's Boys were not the company performing is shown, however, by a passage in the *Induction,* where the citizen-critic, interrupting the Prologue of the "good-man boy," says: "This seven yeares [that] there hath beene playes at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens." Now, at no date between the summer of 1608 and 1611 could it have been said of the Children of Paul's that they had been acting seven years continuously at any one "house." The career of the Paul's Boys as actors at their cathedral school had ended in the summer of 1608, when Robert Keysar, Rossiter, and others interested in the rival company of the Queen's Revels' Children had subsidized Edward Pierce, the manager of the Paul's Boys, to cease plays at St. Paul's.[1] If between that date and 1611 they acted, it was elsewhere, at Whitefriars perhaps, and temporarily (not after 1609), and as the 1 King's Revels' Children.[2] The citizen-critic, therefore, if speaking after the summer of 1608, could not have referred to Paul's Boys. If speaking of Paul's Boys between 1603 and 1608, the only "house" that he can have had in mind would be their school of St. Paul's Cathedral; and to say that there had been plays there for *seven* years would have been utterly point-

[1] Wallace, *Shakspere and the Blackfriars, Century Maga.,* Sept., 1910, p. 751.

[2] Murray, *Eng. Dram. Comp.,* I, 353, who cites Nichols, *Progresses,* IV, 1074; but Whitefriars had been destined by Keysar and others for the Queen's Revels' Children since 1608.

less, for the Paul's Boys had been acting in their school, or in its courtyard, for twenty, one might say fifty years, more or less continuously. Fleay conjectures wildly that they had occupied Whitefriars between 1604 and 1607, but that does not explain the "seven yeares at this house"; to say nothing of the fact that such occupancy is unproved. An old Whitefriars inn-yard playhouse had been "pulled down" in 1582–3. No other Whitefriars Theatre existed till 1607, when a new Whitefriars "was occupied by six equal sharers with original title from Lord Buckhurst." [1]

The company was not that of St. Paul's; and the "house" was not a school-house, but a regularly constituted theatre. Now, the only theatre, public or private, that, at any rate between 1603 and 1611, had been occupied by a boys' company for "this seven yeares" was Blackfriars; and of Blackfriars the statement could be made only at a date preceding January 4, 1610, and with reference to the Queen's Revels' Children. On that date, as reorganized under Rossiter, Keysar, and others, they received a Patent authorizing them to open at Whitefriars, "or in any other convenient place." For about a month before, they had filled an engagement at Blackfriars, the lease of which had reverted on August 9, 1608 to Burbadge and Shakespeare's company of the King's Players. They had ceased playing at Blackfriars as an independent company in March 1608; the theatre had been

[1] Rawlidge, *A Monster lately found out*, etc., 1622, as quoted by Fleay, *H. S.*, 36; Wallace, *Cent. Maga.*, Aug., 1910; and Thorndike, *Infl. of B. and F.*, p. 60.

tenantless after that for six months and then had been closed until December 7, 1609, because of the prevalence of the plague. The Citizen's complaint that the boys have been girding at citizens "this seven yeares there hath been playes at this house" would lose all cogency if spoken of the Queen's Revels' Children when they were acting during the month following December 7, 1609, both because plays had been then intermitted for the twenty months preceding, and because in 1609 it was not seven but twelve years since the boys had begun their occupancy of "this house." It could not apply to the seven years between 1597, when they first occupied Blackfriars, and 1604, because *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* was not written till after the *Travails of Three English Brothers* appeared, June 29, 1607. But it does apply, with all requisite dramatic and chronological accuracy, to the seven years preceding the last date,—or the date in March 1608, when, because of their scandalous representation of the King of France and his mistress in Chapman's *Tragedie of Charles, Duke of Byron,* and because of plays caricaturing and vilifying King James, the Queen's Revels' Children were prohibited from playing, their principal actors thrown into prison, and Blackfriars suppressed. On September 29, 1600, Richard Burbadge had let Blackfriars on a twenty-one-year lease to Henry Evans, the manager of the Queen's Revels' Children, and under the organization of that date they had by 1607–1608 been giving plays exactly "this seven yeares at this house." We are, as I have said, informed by the publisher of *The Knight* that the play was written in eight days. It

might have been staged in two or three. If the plague regulations were enforced during 1607–8, as I have no doubt they were, *The Knight* was acted between July 10 and 23, 1607, or between December 26, 1607 and the Biron day in March 1608.

The internal evidence is all confirmatory of this period of composition. The Queen Anne's Men of the "Red Bull" mentioned in the play obtained their title to the Red Bull from Aaron Holland about 1604. The songs in the play were common property between 1604 and 1607; none of the romances ridiculed is of a later date than 1607; and of the eight plays mentioned or alluded to, all had been acted before June 1607 but *The Travails;* and that was played for the first time June 29 of that year. The allusions to external history such as that in Act IV, ii, 4, to the Prince of Moldavia — who left London in November 1607 — and the humorous jibe at the pretty Paul's Boys of Mr. Mulcaster, who ceased teaching them in 1608, are all for 1607–8.[1] Fleay marshals an applausive gallery of conjectures for his conjecture of 1610, but none of them appears to me to have any substance; and in view of what has been said, and of what will follow, I may dispense with their consideration.

The history of the manuscript is, as has not been noted before, also confirmatory of the 1607–8 date. The Robert Keysar who rescued the play from "perpetuall oblivion" after its failure upon the stage (as

[1] See the impressive array of evidence, internal and external, presented by Thorndike, *Infl. of B. and F.*, pp. 59-63; and by Alden, *K.B.P.*, pp. 166-169 (Belles Lettres Series).

Burre says in the dedication of the first quarto, and who "afterwards" (in 1610–11) turned it over, "yet an infant" (*i. e.* unpublished) and "somewhat ragged," to Burre for publication, is the same "Mr. Keysar" who in February 1606, with "Mr. Kendall," also of the Blackfriars' management, had been paid for "Apparrell" furnished for a performance given by the Children of Westminster School.[1] He at no period had any connection with the Paul's Boys. He was, as Professor Wallace informs us, a London goldsmith who "about this time (1606–7) acquired an interest in the shifting fortunes of Blackfriars, and became the financial backer of the Queen's Revels' Children. He had cause to dislike King James for oppression in wresting money from the goldsmiths."[2] Hence probably the attacks of the Queen's Revels' Children upon the King, which helped to bring about their suppression at Blackfriars in 1608. Keysar would inevitably know all about the plays performed by his Children, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* among the rest, during the last year of their occupancy of Blackfriars. And since, according to Burre, he appreciated the merits of *The Knight* it was but natural that he, and not some person unconnected with the company, should have preserved the manuscript,— perhaps with a view to having the Children try the play again after they should re-open at Whitefriars. With Rossiter, soon after March 1608, he was making preparations for such a reorganiza-

[1] Accounts in *Athenaeum*, 2, 1903, 220.

[2] Wallace, *Cent. Maga., Sept.* 1910, p. 747. See also Greenstreet Papers in Fleay, *H. St.*, 249.

tion. When finally they did re-open at their new theatre, in January 1610, they evidently did not take up the play. Somewhat later, say 1611, Keysar sent the manuscript to Burre for publication. Burre "fostred it privately in his bosome these two yeares" and brought it out in 1613.

The conclusion of Burre's dedicatory address to Keysar in the first quarto, of 1613, has unnecessarily complicated both the question of the date of composition and that of the source of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*. "Perhaps," says he, "it [*The Knight*] will be thought to bee of the race of Don Quixote: we both may confidently sweare, it is his elder above a yeare; and therefore may (by vertue of his birth-right) challenge the wall of him. I doubt not but they will meet in their adventures, and I hope the breaking of one staffe will make them friends; and perhaps they will combine themselves, and travell through the world to seeke their adventures." This denial of indebtedness to Cervantes has been generally taken to refer to Shelton's English translation of Don Quixote, entered S. R. January 19, 1611–12, and printed 1612; and it has, therefore, been supposed by many that *The Knight* was written and first acted in 1610 or 1611. But if Burre was dating *The Knight* as of 1610 or 1611, he was ignorant of the fact, as established above, that the play was the elder of Shelton's printed *Don Quixote,* not merely "above a yeare," but above four years. There are only two other constructions to be placed upon Burre's statement: either that the play was the elder above a year of the first part of *Don Quixote,* issued in the Span-

ish by Cervantes in 1605,[1] or that it was the elder above a year of Shelton's translation as circulated among his friends in manuscript, at any rate as early as 1609. If Burre was dating the play, according to the former interpretation, as of 1604, he was ignorant of the fact that it could not have been written till after the appearance of *The Travails of Three English Brothers,* June 29, 1607. The latter interpretation would, if we could adopt it as his understanding of the matter, not only comport with the date of the production of *The Knight* in 1607–8, but also, somewhat roughly, with his own statement that he had had the manuscript already in a battered condition in his "bosome" since 1610 or 1611.

If Burre, who was not a litterateur, did not know that Shelton's translation of *Don Quixote* had been going the rounds for years before it was printed in 1612, everybody else did. Shelton had announced as much in his *Epistle Dedicatorie* to Theophilus, Lord Howard of Walden, prefixed to the first quarto of 1612. He translated the book, as he says, "some five or six yeares agoe"— that would be in 1607, for he used the Brussels Reprint of that year as his text, —"out of the Spanish Tongue into the English in the space of forty daies: being thereunto more than half enforced through the importunitie of a very deere friende, that was desirous to understand the subject. After I had given him once a view thereof, I cast it aside, where it lay long time neglected in a corner, and so little regarded by me as I never once set hand to review or correct the same. Since when, at the

[1] For this argument see *Engl. Studien,* XII, 309.

entreatie of others my friends, I was content to let it come to light, conditionally that some one or other would peruse and amend the errours escaped"— because he had not time to revise it himself. In other words, Shelton had shown the manuscript translation of *Don Quixote* to but one friend in 1607; and it was not till "long time" had elapsed that he began to circulate it among his other friends on condition that they should correct its errors. The date of circulation was, probably, about 1609, for in that year we have our earliest mention of the reading of *Don Quixote* by an Englishman,— by a dramatic character, to be sure, but a character created by Ben Jonson. In his *Epicoene,* acted in 1610, and written the year preceding, that dramatist makes Truewit advise the young Sir Dauphine to cease living in his chamber "a month together upon *Amadis de Gaule,* or *Don Quixote,* as you are wont." There is no ascription of Spanish to Dauphine, who is a typical London gallant. He would read *Amadis* in the French, or the English translation; and the only translation of *Don Quixote* accessible to him in 1609 would be Shelton's manuscript of Part One.[1] Jonson may himself have been one of the friends to whom Shelton submitted the translation. There is no reason to believe that Jonson had read Cervantes in the original; for, as Professor Rudolph Schevill has conclusively demonstrated,[2] his knowledge of Spanish was extremely limited. "The Spanish phrases pronounced

[1] Baudouin's French version of 1608 is merely of the episodic narrative of *The Curious Impertinent.*

[2] *On the Influence of Spanish Literature upon English* (*Romanische Forschungen,* XX, 613–615, *et seq.*).

by the improvised 'hidalgo' in the *Alchemist* (of 1610) prove nothing." They were caught, as Professor Schevill says, from the London vogue or may have been supplied by some Spanish acquaintance. Indeed, one may even doubt whether if he read Shelton's manuscript Jonson did so with any care, for not only in *The Alchemist* but elsewhere he uniformly couples Don Quixote as if a character of chivalric romance with Amadis, of whom and his congeners Don Quixote is a burlesque.

As to Burre, however, I do not think that he had been informed by Keysar of the exact provenience of the manuscript of *The Knight,* or of the date of first acting. I incline to believe that he had the *Epistle Dedicatorie* of the newly printed Shelton before him when, in 1613, he wrote his dedication of *The Knight* to Robert Keysar; for he runs the figure of the book as a " child " and of its " father " and " stepfather " through his screed as Shelton had run it in 1612; and he hits upon a similar diction of " bosome " and " oblivion." But, though he may have been gratuitously challenging the wall of Shelton's newly printed *Don Quixote* in favour of *The Knight* as in existence by 1610 or 1611, the only interpretation of his " elder above a yeare " that would fit the fact is afforded by the composition of the play, as already demonstrated, in 1607–8, more than a year before Shelton began to circulate his manuscript.

In spite of Burre's assertion of the priority of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* nearly every editor or historian who has touched upon *The Knight* informs us that it is " undoubtedly derived from *Don Quix-*

ote." If (as I am sure was not the case) the play was written after 1608, Beaumont, or Beaumont and Fletcher, could have derived suggestions for it from Shelton's manuscript, first circulated in 1609. That Beaumont, at any rate, was acquainted with the Spanish hero by 1610, appears from his familiarity with the *Epicoene* in which as we have observed, Don Quixote is mentioned; for he wrote commendatory verses for the quarto of that play, entered S. R. September 20 of that year. If, on the other hand, *The Knight,* as I hold, was written in 1607 or 1608, the author or authors, provided they read Spanish, could have derived suggestions from Cervantes' original of 1605; or if they did not read Spanish, from hearsay. The latter source of information would be the more likely, for although sixteen of the ignorantly so-called "Beaumont and Fletcher" plays have been traced to plots in Spanish originals, there is not one of those plots which either of the poets might not have derived from English or French translation; and in none of the sixteen plays is there any evidence that either of the dramatists had a reading knowledge of Spanish.[1] As to the possibility of information by hearsay, other dramatists allude to *Don Quixote* as early as 1607–8;[2] and, indeed, it would be vir-

[1] Of this I am assured by my colleague, Professor Rudolph Schevill, who has made a special study of the plays and their sources, and has published some of his conclusions in the article in *Romanische Forschungen,* already cited; others, communicated by him to Dr. H. S. Murch, appear in *Yale Studies in English,* XXXIII, *The K.B.P.,* Introduction. Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach's unpublished conclusions, as cited by Miss Hatcher, *John Fletcher,* etc., 1905, p. 42, are to the same effect.

[2] Wilkins, *Miseries of Enforced Marriage,* III; Middleton, *Your Five Gallants,* IV, 8; cited by Schevill, *ut supra.*

tually impossible that any literary Londoner could have escaped the oral tradition of so popular and impressive a masterpiece two years after its publication.

All this supposition of derivation from *Don Quixote* is, however, so far as verbal indebtedness goes, or indebtedness for *motifs,* episodes, incidents and their sequence, characters, machinery, dramatic construction, manners, sentiments, and methods of satire, a phantom caught out of the clear sky. So far as the satire upon the contemporary literature of chivalry is concerned, when the ridicule is not of English stuff unknown to Cervantes it is of Spanish material translated into English and already satirized by Englishmen before Cervantes wrote his *Don Quixote.* An examination of *The Knight* and of the *Don* in any version, and of contemporary English literature, reveals incontestibly not only that the material satirized, the phrases and ideas, come from works in English, but that even the method of the satire is derived from that of preceding English dramatic burlesque rather than from that of Cervantes.

The title of the play was suggested by *The Knight of the Burning Sword,* an English translation, current long before 1607, of the Spanish *Amadis of Greece, Prince and Knight of the Burning Sword.* Ten full years before 1607 Falstaff had dubbed his red-nosed Bardolph "Knight of the Burning Lamp." The farcical, but eminently sane, grocer's apprentice, turned Knight for fun, grows out of Heywood's *Foure Prentises,* and Day and Wilkins's *Travails,* and the English *Palmerins,* etc. He has absolutely noth-

ing in common with the glorious but pathetically unbalanced *Don* of Cervantes. Nor is there any resemblance between Ralph's Palmerin-born Squire and Dwarf — and that embodiment of commonsense, Sancho Panza.[1] The specific conception of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* a satire upon the craze of London tradesmen for romances of chivalry, for "bunches of Ballads and Songs, all ancient," for the bombast and sensationalism of Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy,* Marlowe's *True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York,* even of Shakespeare's Hotspur, and of dramas of bourgeois knight-errantry,— a burlesque of the civic domestic virtues and military prowess of prentices and shop-keepers,— is much more applicable to the conditions and aspirations of contemporary Bow-Bells and the affectations of the contemporary stage than to those which begot and nourished the madness of the Knight of La Mancha.

Beaumont may have received from the success of the *Don Quixote* of 1605 some impulse provocative to the writing of *The Knight,* but a dramatic satire, such as *The Knight,* might have occurred to him if *Don Quixote* had never been written; just as that other dramatic satire upon the dramas of folk-lore romance, *The Old Wives Tale,* had occurred to Peele some fifteen years before *Don Quixote* appeared; and as it had occurred to the author of *Thersites* to ridicule, upon the stage, Greek tales of heroism and British worthies of knighthood and the greenwood still fifty-five years earlier. The puritan and the ritualist, the country justice and the squire, the schoolmaster

[1] See Schevill, *u. s.*

and the scribbling pedant, the purveyor of marvels of forest and marsh, the knight-adventurer of ancient lore or of modern creation, the damsel distressed or enamoured of visionary castles, had, one and all, awakened laughter upon the Tudor stage. The leisure wasted, and the emotion misspent, over the *Morte d'Arthur* and the histories of Huon of Bordeaux, Guy of Warwick, Bevis of Hamptoun, or of Robin Hood and Clim of the Clough, had been deplored by many an anxious educator and essayist of the day. Why was it not time and the fit occasion, in a period when city grocers and their wives would tolerate no kind of play but such as revamped the more modern tales of chivalry, or tricked tradesmen out in the factitious glory of quite recent heroes of romance,— why was it not time for an attack upon the vogue of Anthony Munday's translations of the now offending cycles, *Amadis of Gaul, Palmerin de Oliva, Palmerin of England,* and upon the vogue of the English versions of *The Mirror of Knighthood* with its culminating bathos of the *Knight of the Sunne and His Brother Rosicleer?* These had, in various instalments, befuddled the popular mind for thirty years.

Ben Jonson already, in his *Every Man out of His Humour* (1599), had satirized the common affectation under the similitude of a country knight, Puntarvolo, who, if not crazed, was at any rate "wholly consecrated to singularity" by reason of undue absorption of romances of chivalry, a singularity of "fashion, phrase, and gesture" of the Anthony Munday type and the type glassed in the *Mirror*

of Knighthood. Sir Puntarvolo, who "sits a great horse" and "courts his own lady, as she were a stranger never encountered before,"— who feigns that his own house is a castle, who summons with trumpet-blast the waiting-woman to the window, and, saluting her "after some little flexure of the knee," asks for the lord of the edifice, and that the "beauties" of the "lady" may shine on this side of the building,— who "planet struck" by the "heavenly pulchritude" of his long-suffering and much bewildered poor old wife, conveys to her the information that he is a poor knight-errant pursuing through the forest a hart "escaped by enchantment," and that, wearied, he and his servant make "suit to enter" her fair abode,— Sir Puntarvolo, who every morning thus performs fantastic homage, what is he but a predecessor of Don Quixote and Ralph alike, fashioned out of the materials of decadent chivalric fiction common to both? In 1600, Robert Anton had burlesqued in prose and rhyme the romantic ballads of the day in his ludicrous *Heroical Adventures of the Knight of the Sea,* where "the queen of the fairies transforms a submissive and apathetic cow into a knight-errant to do her business in the world" [1] And in 1605, also before the appearance of Cervantes' burlesque, Chapman, with the collaboration of Jonson and Marston, had, in *Eastward Hoe,* satirized that other kind of knight, him of the city and by purchase, in the character of Sir Petronel Flash; and, with him, the aspirations of romance-fed merchants' daughters who would wed knights and dwell in country-castles wrested from

[1] H. V. Routh, in *C. H. L.,* IV, 410.

giants. Nor had these authors failed to specify the sources of delusion, the *Mirror of Knighthood,* the *Palmerin of England,* etc. That both Beaumont and Fletcher were alive, without prompting from Cervantes, to the mania of chivalric emulation which obsessed the train-bands of London is attested by the bombastic talk of "Rosicleer" which Fletcher puts into the mouth of the city captain in *Philaster,* a play that was written about two years later than *The Knight,* in 1609 or 1610. There had been musters of the City companies at Mile End as early as 1532, and again under Elizabeth in 1559, and 1585, and 1599, when as many as 30,000 citizens were trained there. But the muster in which Ralph had been chosen "citty captaine" was evidently that of 1605, a general muster under James I.

Why, then, should we suppose that it was beyond the genius of a Beaumont to conceive, as Peele, Jonson, Chapman, Marston, and others had conceived, a drama which should burlesque the devotees of such romances as were the fad of the day? And to conceive it without the remotest suggestion from *Don Quixote*? Whether Beaumont read Spanish or not, and there is no proof that he did read it; whether he had heard of *Don Quixote* or not, and there is little doubt that he had, there is nothing in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* that in any way presupposes either verbal acquaintance with, or constructive dependence upon, the burlesque of Cervantes.[1] In short,

[1] The lines,

> Who like Don Quixote do advance
> Against a windmill our vaine lance,

occur in a copy of verses *To the Mutable Faire* included among

Professor Schevill, in the article cited above, and following him Dr. Murch, in an admirable introduction to his edition of *The Knight,* have shown that Beaumont's conception of the hero, Ralph, not only is not of a piece with, but is fundamentally different from, Cervantes' conception of Don Quixote; and they have demonstrated with a minuteness of chapter and verse that need not be recapitulated here that the motives, machinery and characters, ideas and phrases are, in so far as they have relation to romances of chivalry, drawn out of, or suggested by, the English translations already enumerated. This demonstration applies to the adoption of the squire, the rescue of Mrs. Merrythought, the incident of the casket, the liberation of the barber's patients, the mock-heroic love-affair, as well as to the often adduced barber's basin and the scene of the inn. Of the situations, there is none that is not a logical issue of the local conditions or the presuppositions of an original plot; whereas there are, on the other hand, numerous situations in *Don Quixote,* capable of dramatic treatment, that the Elizabethan playwright of 1607–8 could hardly have refrained from annexing if he had used that story as a source. The setting or background of *The Knight,* as Professor Schevill has said, in no way recalls that of the *Don,* " and it is difficult to see how any inspiration got from Cervantes should have failed to include at least a slight shadow of something which implies an acquaintance with Rocinante

The Poems of Francis Beaumont in the edition of 1640. But the volume includes numerous poems not written by Beaumont, and is one of the most uncritical collections that ever was printed. This poem is by Waller.

and Sancho Panza." Beaumont, in addition, not only satirizes, as I have said, the chivalric and bourgeois dramas of Heywood, *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody,* etc., and dramas of romantic marvel like *Mucedorus* and the *Travails,* and parodies with rare humour the rant of Senecan tragedy; he not only ridicules the military ardour and pomp of the London citizens, and pokes fun at their unsophisticated assumption of dramatic insight and critical instinct,— with all this satire of the main plot and of the spectator-gods in the machinery, he has combined a romantic plot of common life — Jasper, Luce, and Humphrey,— and a comic plot of humours in which Jasper's father, mother, and brother live as Merrythoughts should He has produced a whole that in drama was an innovation and in burlesque a triumph. *The Knight* was still an acting play in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. During the past thirteen years it has been acted by academic amateurs five times in America.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FIVE CENTRAL PLAYS

SIX.— *The Coxcombe* was first printed in the folio of 1647. Our earliest record of its acting is of a performance at Court by the Children of the Queen's Revels in 1612.[1] The day was between October 16 and 24. A list of the principal actors, all Queen's Children, preserved in the folio of 1679, indicates, however, that this was not the first performance; for three of the actors listed had left that company by August 29, 1611; one of them (Joseph Taylor) perhaps before March 30, 1610. The list was evidently contemporary with the first performance. The absolute upper limit of the composition was 1604, for one of the characters speaks of the taking of Ostend. If the play, as we are dogmatically informed by a credulous sequence of critics who take statements at second-hand, principally from German doctors' theses, were derived from Cervantes' story, *El Curioso Impertinente,* which appeared in the First Part of *Don Quixote,* printed 1605, or (since we have no evidence that our dramatists read Spanish), from Baudouin's French translation which was licensed April 26, 1608[2] and may have reached Eng-

[1] Cited by Oldys (Ms. note in Langbaine's *Account of Engl. Dram. Poets,* p. 208) — Dyce.

[2] For this information I am indebted to my colleague, Professor Schevill.

land about June,— we might have a definite earlier limit of later date. But there is no resemblance between the *motif* of Cervantes' story, in which a husband out of curiosity and an impudent desire to heighten the treasure of his love would try his wife's fidelity, and that of Beaumont and Fletcher's play, where there is no question of a trial of honour. In Beaumont and Fletcher, we have a revelation of lust at first sight on the part of the husband's friend, Mercury, of unnatural friendly pandering on the part of that 'natural fool' the husband, Antonio, and of easy acquiescence on the part of Maria, the wife, in the cuckolding of her idiotic coxcomb, who with the wool pulled over his eyes takes her back believing that she is innocent. In Cervantes, the husband, sure of his wife and adoring her, urges his friend to make trial of her honour; the friend, outraged at first by the suggestion, refuses, but finally succumbs to passion and wins the wife, likewise, at first, above suspicion; and all die tragically. There is no resemblance in treatment, atmosphere, incidents, or dialogue. The only community of conception is that of a husband playing with fire — risking cuckoldom. But Cervantes' character of the husband is sentimentally deluded; Beaumont and Fletcher's is a contemptible and willing wittol. If Beaumont and Fletcher derived their plot from Cervantes, all that can be said is that they have mutilated and vulgarized the original out of all possibility of recognition.[1]

[1] I know but two sane accounts of this matter: A. S. W. Rosenbach's in *Mod. Lang. Notes,* 101, Column 362 (1898); and Wolf-

Other English dramatists dealing with the theme of *The Curious Impertinent* between 1611 and 1615 followed Cervantes more or less closely in the main *motif,* in incident, and in dialogue: the author of *The Second Maiden's Tragedy,* for instance, who made use of Baudouin's translation; and Nathaniel Field, who used either Baudouin or Shelton's publication of 1612 in his *Amends for Ladies.* But Beaumont and Fletcher in their tale of a husband cuckolded and pommeled were drawing upon another source, one of the many variants of *Le Mari coccu, battu et content,* to be found in Boccaccio and before him in Old French poems, and French and Italian *Nouvelles.* If they derived anything from Cervantes, whose theme is lifted from the *Orlando Furioso,* it was merely the suggestion for a fresh drama of cuckoldry. That their play was regarded by others as thus inspired appears, I think, from a passage in Ben Jonson's *Alchemist,* IV, vii, 40–41, where, after Kastril has said to Surly, "You are a Pimpe, and a Trig, and an Amadis de Gaule, or a Don Quixote," Drugger adds, "Or a Knight o' the curious cox-combe, Doe you see?" Field and the rest, writing in or after 1611, had uniformly referred to Cervantes' cuckold as the Curious Impertinent. Jonson wrote his *Alchemist* between July 12 and October 3, 1610, and up to that time the cuckold had been dramatized as Coxcomb only by Beaumont and Fletcher. The prefix 'Curious' indicates that in Jonson's mind his friend's play is associated with Cervantes' novel;

gang von Wurzbach's, in *Romanische Forschungen,* XX, pp. 514–536 (1907).

and the further prefix of 'The Knight' looks very much like a reminiscence of "The Knight of the Burning Pestle," which had been played some two years before. This argument from contemporaneity of inspiration and allusion inclines me to date the upper limit of *The Coxcombe* about 1609, after Baudouin's translation *Le Curieux Impertinent* had reached England, and Shelton's manuscript had been put in circulation.

If to this conjecture we could add a precise determination of the period of Joseph Taylor's connection with the Queen's Revels' Children, we should have a definite lower limit for the performance of *The Coxcombe* in which he took part. But I find it impossible to decide whether Taylor had been with the Queen's Revels up to about March 30, 1610, upon which day his name appears among the Duke of York's Players who were recently reorganized and had just obtained a new patent; or had been up to that time with the predecessors of the Duke of York's (Prince Charles's) Company, and had left them shortly after March 30 for the Queen's Revels' Children. In favour of the former alternative are (1) that in the list of the Queen's Revels' actors in *The Coxcombe* he appears second to Field only, as if a player of long standing with them and high in the company's esteem at the time of the performance; (2) that he does not appear among the actors in the list for *Epicoene* which was presented first by the Queen's Revels' Children between January 4 and March 25, 1610: Field is still first, Barkstead, who had been eighth on the *Coxcombe* list, appears now second, as

if promoted to Taylor's place, and Giles Carey is third in both lists; (3) that in the March 30 patent to the Duke of York's Players his name ranks only fifth, as if that of a recent acquisition. On this basis the lower limit would be March 25, 1610. In favour of the latter alternative, viz., that Taylor joined the Queen's Children from the Duke of York's, at a date later than March 30, 1610, are the considerations: (1) that when the new Princess Elizabeth's Company, formed April 11, 1611, gives a bond to Henslowe on August 29 of that year, Taylor's name appears with two of the Queen's Revels' Children of March 1610, as if all three had left the Queen's Revels for the new company at the same time; and (2) that their names appear close together after that of the principal organizer as if not only actors of repute in the company which they had left but prime movers in the new organization. On this basis the lower limit for the performance of *The Coxcombe,* at a time when all three were yet Queen's Revels' Children, would be August 29, 1611. Consulting the restrictions necessitated by the plague rate, we have, then, an option for the date of acting: either between December 7, 1609 and July 12, 1610, when Jonson had begun his *Alchemist,* or between November 29, 1610 and July 1611. In the latter case Ben Jonson's "Knight o' the curious coxcombe" would precede the performance of Beaumont and Fletcher's play and could not be an allusion. In the former, it would immediately follow the acting of *The Coxcombe,* and would manifestly be suggested by that play. I prefer the former option; and date the acting,—on the assumption that

Taylor left the Queen's Revels by March 30, 1610,— before that date.[1] Since Fletcher's contribution to the play has been mangled by a reviser it is impossible to draw conclusions as to the date of composition from the evidence of his literary style. But the characteristics of Beaumont in the minor plot are those of the period in which the *Letter to Ben Jonson* and *Philaster* were written. The play as first performed was condemned for its length by "the ignorant multitude."[2] I believe that it was one of the two or three unsuccessful comedies which preceded *Philaster;* and, as I have said above, that it is the play referred to in the *Letter to Ben Jonson,* toward the end of 1609.[3] If the date of acting was before January 4, 1610, the theatre was Blackfriars; if after, Whitefriars.

The Prologue in the first folio speaks of a revision. But though the hand of one, and perhaps of another, reviser is unmistakably present, the play is properly included among Beaumont and Fletcher's works. In the commendatory verses of 1647, Hills and Gardiner speak of the play as Fletcher's, but all tests show that Beaumont wrote a significant division of it,— the natural, vigorous, tender, and poetic subplot of Ricardo's desertion of Viola and his ultimate reclamation,— with the exception of three scenes and parts of two or three more. The exceptions are the first thirty-five lines of Act I, which have been supplied by some reviser; 1, 3, in which also the reviser appears; 1, 5, the drinking-bout in the tavern, where

[1] Oliphant, *Engl. Stud.,* XV, 322. Macaulay, 'probably 1610.'
[2] *Prologue* in the first folio.
[3] Chapter VII.

some of the words (*e. g.* "claw'd") indicate Fletcher, — and the gratuitous obscenity, Fletcher or his reviser; and Act II, 2, where Viola is bound by the tinkers and rescued by Valerio.[1] Perhaps, also, the last thirty-six lines of Act III, 3, where Fletcher is discernible in the afterthoughts "a likely wench, and a good wench," "a very good woman, and a gentlewoman," and the hand of a reviser in the mutilation of the verse; and certainly Act IV, 3, where Fletcher appears at his best in this play.

The romantic little comedy of *Ricardo and Viola* is so loosely joined with the foul portrayal of the Coxcomb who succeeds in prostituting his wife to his friend, that it might be published separately and profitably as the work of Beaumont.[2] It is well constructed; and it conveys a noble tribute to the purity and constancy of woman, her grace of forgiveness, and her influence over erring man. When Viola speaks she is a living person, instinct with recklessness, sweetness, and pathos. Few heroines of Elizabethan comedy have compressed so much reality and poetry into so narrow a compass. "Might not," she whispers when stealing forth at night to meet Ricardo: —[3]

> Might not God have made
> A time for envious prying folk to sleep
> Whilst lovers met, and yet the sun have shone?

And then:

[1] Even here, as Oliphant has said, Viola's first speech "is pure Beaumont."

[2] His scenes are I, 4, 6; II, 4; III, 3 (to "where I may find service"; IV, 1, 2, 7; V. 2, and the last twenty-seven lines of V, 3.

[3] I, 4. Scenes as arranged in Dyce, Vol. III.

Alas, how valiant and how fraid at once
Love makes a Virgin!

When she comes upon her lover staggering outside the tavern with his sodden comrades,[1] with what simplicity she shudders:

I never saw a drunken man before;
But these I think are so. . . .
My state is such, I know not how to think
A prayer fit for me; only I could move
That never Maiden more might be in love!

When, rescued from thieves in the country, she finds that her rescuer is even more a peril,[2] with what childlike trust she appeals:

Pray you, leave me here
Just as you found me, a poor innocent,
And Heaven will bless you for it!

When again deserted, with what pathos she sighs:

"I'll sit me down and weep:
All things have cast me from 'em but the earth.
The evening comes, and every little flower
Droops now, as well as I!

And, finally, when she has rediscovered Ricardo, and conquered his self-reproach by her forgiveness, which is "to love you," with what admirable touch of nature and delicious humour she gives verisimilitude to her story and herself:[3]

[1] I, 6. [2] III, 3. [3] V, 2.

> Methinks I would not now, for any thing,
> But you *had* mist me: I have made a story
> Will serve to waste many a winter's fire,
> When we are old. I 'll tell my daughters then
> The miseries their Mother had in love,
> And say, " My girls, be wiser " ; yet I would not
> Have had more wit myself.

Ricardo, too, is a creative study in the development of personality; and the rural scenes and characters are convincing.

In the main plot Beaumont had no hand whatever, unless it be in the prose of the trial-scene at the end of the fifth act. The rest is Fletcher's; but in a few scenes his work has been revamped, and in verse as well as style degraded by the reviser. Oliphant thinks that here and there Massinger may be traced; [1] and here and there, Rowley.[2] I should be sorry to impute any of the mutilations to the former. I think that the irregular lines, trailing or curtailed, the weak endings, the finger-counted syllables, puerile accentuation, and bad grammar have much nearer kinship with the earlier output of the latter. But of whatever sins of supererogation his revisers may have been guilty, the prime offense is Fletcher's — in dramatizing that story at all. To make a comedy out of cuckoldry was not foreign to the genius of the Elizabethans: for the pruriency of it we can make historical allowance. But a comedy in which the wittol-hero successfully conducts the cuckolding of himself is nauseating. And that the wittol, his adulterous wife,

[1] I, 1, 2^a (to Antonio's entry), III, 1^a (to servant's entry).
[2] III, 2; IV, 4; V, 1, 3.

and the fornicator should conclude the affair in mutual gratulation is, from the dramatic point of view, worse even than prurient and nauseating; it is unnatural, and therefore unsuited to artistic effect. No amount of technical ingenuity on Fletcher's part could have made his contribution to this play worthy of literary criticism.

Though *The Coxcombe* was not successful in its first production before the "ignorant multitude," it was "in the opinion of men of worth well received and favoured." We have seen that it was played at Court in 1612 in the festivities for the Elector Palatine's approaching marriage with the Princess Elizabeth. It was revived for Charles I and Queen Henrietta in 1636; and it was one of the twenty-seven "old plays" presented in the City theatres after the Restoration, and before 1682. In the revivals Beaumont's romantic subplot gradually assumed the dominant position, and it was finally borrowed outright for a comedy called *The Fugitives,* constructed by Richardson and acted by the Drury Lane company in 1792. With Palmer in the part of Young Manly (the Ricardo of the original), and Mrs. Jordan as Julia (alias Beaumont's Viola), the adaptation ran for a dozen nights or more.

7.— *Philaster* or *Love lies a-Bleeding* was "divers times acted at the Globe, and Blacke-Friers by his Majesties Servants." Under the second title in the *Scourge of Folly,* entered for publication October 8, 1610, Davies of Hereford appears to mention it; and I have already stated my reasons as based upon the

history of the theatres[1] for believing that its first performance took place between December 7, 1609 and July 12, 1610.

We might have something like confirmation of this date from the grouping of epigrams in Davies of Hereford's *Scourge of Folly,* if we could affirm that they were arranged in the order of their composition. For just before the epigram on *Love lies a-Bleeding,* which, I think, without doubt, applies to *Philaster,* appears one *To the Roscius of these times, Mr. W. Ostler,* saluting him as "sole king of actors." Now Osteler, Ostler, or Osler, had been one of the Queen's Revels' Children,— most of them from thirteen to sixteen years of age at the time,— in 1601 when Jonson's *Poetaster* was acted. He could not have been more than twenty-three years of age while still playing with the Queen's Children in 1608; and he would certainly not have been styled "sole king of actors" at that age. According to the supplication of Cuthbert Burbadge and others in the well-known suit of 1635 concerning the shares in the Blackfriars theatre,[2] before Evans surrendered the lease of that theatre in 1608, some of the Queen's Revels' Children "growing up to bee men, which were Underwood, Field, Ostler, were taken to strengthen the King's service; and the more to strengthen the service, the boys daily wearing out, it was considered that house would bee as fitt for ourselves [the King's Company], and soe [we] purchased the lease remaining from Evans with our money, and placed men players, which were Hemings,

[1] Chapter VII, above.

[2] Halliwell-Phillipps, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare,* I, 317.

Condell, Shakespeare, etc." On the face of it this deposition places the transference of Underwood, Field, and Ostler to the King's Company between the beginning of April 1608 when the Revels' Children were temporarily suppressed and August of that year when the Burbadges, Shakespeare, Hemings, and others took over Evans's unexpired lease of Blackfriars with a view to occupying it themselves. But the deposition of Cuthbert Burbadge was not made till twenty-seven years after the occurrence described; and is not to be trusted as a statement of the sequence of events. The Boys may have acted temporarily with, or under the supervision of, the King's Company at Blackfriars between December 7, 1609 and January 4, 1610; but one of them, Field, is at the head of the new Queen's Revels at Whitefriars by March 25, 1610, and does not appear in the lists of the King's Men till 1616; and there is no record of Underwood and Ostler as members of the latter company before the end of 1610, when they acted in Jonson's *Alchemist* (after October 3). Since Underwood and Ostler were not with the new Queen's Revels after January of that year, it is probable that Davies's epigram to the latter as "the Roscius of these times" in the *Scourge of Folly,* entered for publication on October 8, 1610, was written after Ostler had attained distinction in Shakespeare's company, the company of the leading actors of the day, and that the grouping of the epigram to Ostler with that of the epigram to Fletcher on *Philaster* presented by that company indicates contemporaneity in the composition of the epigrams,— that is

to say, between January 4 and October, 1610.

Since, however, the epigrams in *The Scourge of Folly,* though frequently arranged by groups, sometimes of mental association, sometimes of contemporaneous composition, do not follow a continuous chronological order, the juxtaposition of these two epigrams cannot be regarded as more than a feather's evidence to the direction of the wind. Of much greater weight as confirming the date of *Philaster,* as conjectured above, is its resemblance to Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* not only in general features of background and atmosphere, plot, typical characters, romantic motive, situations, and style, but also in specific detail. I shall presently attempt to show at greater length that there is nothing in the *Philaster* or the *Cymbeline* to indicate the priority of the former. But I must at the risk of anticipating indicate in this place though briefly the argument of a later chapter.[1] For the *Cymbeline,* I accept the date assigned by the majority of critics, 1609. Shakespeare had had the character of Imogen (or Innogen) in mind since he first introduced her, years before, as a silent personage in *Much Ado about Nothing* (the quarto of 1600). In execution the play is, with *The Winter's Tale* and the *Tempest,* the dramatic sequel of that first of his "dramatic romances,"— of which the leading conception is the loss and recovery of a wife or child,— the *Pericles* written in 1607 or 1608. And since already in *Pericles,* Shakespeare had blazed this new path, I cannot for a moment accept the

[1] Chapter XXVIII, *Did the Beaumont 'Romance' Influence Shakespeare?*

hypothesis that he is in his *Cymbeline* borrowing profusely from *Philaster,* a work of comparatively unestablished dramatists who had but recently been admitted to authorship for the company of which Shakespeare had been for eighteen years the principal, almost the only, playwright. It is much more according to human probability that the younger dramatists, since about the beginning of 1610 associated with the King's Company and its enterprises, should have adapted their technical and poetic style of construction to the somewhat novel — to them entirely novel — method of the seasoned playwright of the King's Servants, as tried and approved in *Pericles* and *Cymbeline.* And still the more so when one reflects that, in *Pericles* and *Cymbeline,* aside from the leading conception, everything of major or minor detail had been already anticipated by Shakespeare himself in earlier romantic comedies from *The Two Gentleman of Verona* to *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night;* and that there is no salient characteristic of dramatic construction in *Philaster,* otherwise original and poetically impressive as it is, which a study of those earlier comedies and of the *Pericles* and *Cymbeline* would not suggest. I, therefore, rest with some assurance upon the conviction that *Philaster* was first acted by the King's Company, soon after Beaumont and Fletcher began to write for it, say between December 1609 and July 1610.

The play was first published in a quarto of 1620 which ascribes it, as does the vastly improved quarto of 1622, to Beaumont and Fletcher. In his epigram, addressed somewhat before October 8, 1610 to "the

well-deserving Mr. John Fletcher," John Davies appears to give that author credit for practically the whole work,—"Thou . . . raign'st in Arte, Judgement, and Invention," and adds a compliment for "thine as faire as faithfull Sheepheardesse." Herrick, writing for the folio of 1647, mentions *Love Lies a-Bleeding* among Fletcher's "incomparable plays"; and Thomas Stanley seems to ascribe to him definitely the scene "when first Bellario bled." John Earle, however, writing "on Master Beaumont, presently after his death" comes nearer the truth when he says:

> Alas, what flegme are they [Plautus and Aristophanes],
> compared to thee,
> In thy *Philaster* and *Maids Tragedy!*
> Where 's such an humour as thy Bessus? pray. . . .

for, with the exception of three scenes, two half-scenes and a few insertions or revisions by Fletcher, *Philaster* is Beaumont's (and practically the same holds true of *The Maides Tragedy,* and the Bessus play — *A King and No King.* In *Philaster* Fletcher's scenes, as proved by rhetorical tests, and by metrical when they may be applied, are I, 1^b (from the King's entry, line 89 — line 358,[1] — a revision and enlargement of Beaumont's original sketch), II, 2^b (from *Enter Megra*), II, 4^b (from *Megra above*), V, 3 and V, 4. The first part of Act II, 4 was written by Beaumont; but Fletcher has inserted lines 14 to 29 (from *Enter Arethusa and Bellario* to "how brave she keeps him"). Similarly, the first draught

[1] Lines are numbered as in the *Variorum* edition.

of Act III, 2 was Beaumont's; certainly lines 1–34 (exit King), 105–112 (the opening of Philaster's long tirade and 129–173 (from Philaster's exit to end). But beginning with Arethusa's soliloquy, line 35, we find insertions marked by Fletcher's metrical characteristics, his alliterations, favourite words and ideas, tautological expansions, repetitions, interrogations, triplets, redundant "alls" and "hows." The last three lines of that soliloquy are his:

> Soul-sick with poison, strike the monuments
> Where noble names lie sleeping, till they sweat
> And the cold marble melt;[1]

and he has overlaid (in lines 113–128) with his rhetorical triplets, his "alls" and "hows" the genuine poetry of Philaster's accusation of Arethusa. "The *story* of a woman's face," her inconstancy, the shadow quality even of her "goodness" soon past and forgotten,—"these sad texts"[2] Fletcher "to his last hour" is never weary of repeating.

It will be observed that, in general, Fletcher's scenes are elaborative, bombastic, verbally witty, conversationally easy, at times bustling, at times spectacular, but not vitally contributory to the business of the play. They comprise the longest speeches of the King, Pharamond, Philaster, Megra, and Bellario. Some of these, such as the King's denunciation of

[1] Fletcher affects this figure, *cf. A Wife for a Month,* Act II, 2, lines 47-48.

[2] *Cf.* his lines in *Maides Tragedy,* IV, 1, 252–254; in *King and No King,* IV, 2, 57–62; *Philaster,* V, 4, 114; *Hum. Lieut.,* IV, 5, 51; *Mad Lover,* III, 4, 105; *Loyall Subject,* III, 6, 141; IV, 3, 70; *Wife for a Month,* IV, 5, 38, 39.

Megra and her reply are wild, whirling, and vulgar rhetoric. The bawdy half-scene with its maid of easy honour is his; the discovery of the low intrigue, the simulated masque and the mob-scene are his. They may display, but they do not develop, characters. They are sometimes fanciful; sometimes gracefully poetic as in V, 3, 83–84, where his "all your better deeds shall be in water writ, but this in marble" anticipates Keats's famous epitaph; sometimes realistic; but they lack the pervading emotion, imagination, elevation of Beaumont. The play, in fact, is not only preponderatingly but primarily Beaumont's, from the excellent exposition in the first act to the series of sensational surprises which precede the dénouement in the fifth. The conception of the characters and the complication are distinctive of that writer's plots: the impulsive, misjudged, and misguided hero, his violence toward the love-lorn maiden disguised as a page, and his unwarranted suspicion of the honour of his mistress. The subtle revelations of personality are Beaumont's: the simplicity, self-renunciation, lyric pathos and beauty of Bellario, the nobler aspects of Dion, the maidenly audacities, sweet bewilderments and unmerited tribulations of Arethusa, the combination of idyllic, pathetic, and romantic, the visualization, the naturalness of figure and setting, the vigour of dramatic progress, the passion, the philosophical insights, and the memorable lines. His, too, the humour of the rural sketches — the Country Fellow who has "seen something yet," the occasional frank animality, as well as the tender beauty of innocence. Not only are the virtues of the play Beaumont's but some of

its faults of conception and construction; and those faults are the unmanly suspicious startings of the hero and his melodramatic violence, the somewhat fortuitous succession of the crises, and the subordination of Bellario in the dénouement.

The popularity of *Philaster* as an acting play, not only at Court but in the city, is attested by contemporary record. It was played after the Restoration with success; and between 1668 and 1817 it enjoyed thirteen revivals,— the last at Bath on December 12 of the latter year, with Ward in the title-rôle and Miss Jarmin as Bellario.[1]

8.— *The Maides Tragedy,* acted by the King's Men during the festivities at Court, October 1612 to March 1613, was known to Sir George Buc when, October 31, 1611, he licensed an anonymous play as "this second maiden's tragedy." It was acted by the King's also at Blackfriars; and since it is in every way a more mature production than *Philaster,* I think that it followed that play, toward the end of 1610 or in 1611. It was first published in 1619, in quarto and anonymously. The quarto of 1622 is also anonymous; that of 1630 gives the names of Beaumont and Fletcher as authors. In the commendatory verses to the folio of 1647, Henry Howard ascribes the scene of Amintor's suicide to Fletcher; Waller assigns to him "brave Melantius in his gallantry" and "Aspatia

[1] The best editions of *Philaster* since the time of Dyce are those of F. S. Boas, in the *Temple Dramatists* (1898), P. A. Daniel, in the *Variorum* (1904), Glover and Waller, in the *Camb. Engl. Classics* (1905), and A. H. Thorndike in *Belles Lettres* (1906).

weeping in her gown"; Stanley, too, gives him the weeping Aspatia; and Herrick, "Evadne swelling with brave rage." These descriptions are as misleading as blind. D'Avenant comes nearer the mark in his Prologue to *The Woman-Hater,* already quoted, where he indicates correctly an Evadne scene and an Aspatia scene as of Fletcher's composition. Metrical tests, corrected by the rhetorical, show that Fletcher's contributions are limited to three scenes and two half-scenes. The list opens with those to which D'Avenant alludes: II, 2, in which Fletcher "taught the sad Aspatia how to mourn," and IV, 1 (as far as line 200, "Prithee, do not mock me"), in which he "reduced Evadne from her scorn"; and it includes, also, the ten lines of V, 1, the larger part of V, 2 (to *Exit Evadne*), and the perfunctory V, 3. As to Fletcher's authorship of II, 2 no doubt can be entertained. It is an admirable example of his double endings (almost 40 per cent), his end-stopped lines (80 per cent), anapæstic rhythms and jolts, as well as of his vocabulary, his favourite figures and his incremental second thoughts. I fail to see how any critic can assign it to Beaumont.[1] As frequently with Fletcher, Aspatia's mourning, though beautiful, is a falsetto from the classics; more like one of Rossetti's or Leigh Hunt's poetic descriptions of a picture than a first-hand reproduction of nature and passion. There is likewise no doubt concerning the authorship of the first part of Act IV, 1 (lines 1–189), in which Me-

[1] Thorndike, for instance,—who selects lines 22-40 as an instance of Beaumont's skill in imitating natural conversation. *Influence of B. and F. on Shakespeare,* p. 129.

lantius convinces Evadne of sin and drives her to vengeance upon the King. The latter part of the scene, also, appears to have been written by Fletcher in the first instance, and to have consisted of the first six speeches after the entrance of Amintor (lines 190–200), Evadne's "I have done nothing good to win belief" (247–254, 260–262), and the conclusion (263–285). But between Amintor's supplication "Prithee do not mock me" (line 200) and Evadne's assertion of sincerity "I have done nothing good to win belief" (line 247 [1]), Beaumont has inserted four speeches that of themselves convert a colloquy otherwise histrionic and mechanical into one of the tenderest passages of the play. In Evadne's "My whole life is so leprous it infects All my repentance"—"That slight contrition"—"Give me your griefs; you are an innocent, A soul as white as Heaven"—"Shoot your light into me"—"Dissembling with my tears"—"Cut from man's remembrance," we hear the words, phrases, and figures of Beaumont; and we trace him in the repeated use of "do." We find him in Amintor's "Seed of virtue left to shoot up"—"put a thousand sorrows off"—"that dull calamity"—"that strange misbelief"—and in

> Mock not *the powers above* that can and dare
> Give thee a great example of their justice
> To all ensuing ages.[2]

And in five verses of Evadne's succeeding asseveration

1 Numbering of the *Variorum*. 2 Q2 "eies."

of sincere reform (255–259), we are thrilled by his sudden magic and his poetic finality:

> *Those short days I shall number to my rest*
> (As many must not see me) shall, though too late,
> Though in my evening, yet perceive a will,—
> Since I can do no good, because a woman,—
> *Reach constantly at something that is near it.*

The ground-work of this latter portion, from Amintor's entrance, where Evadne cries "Oh, my lord," "My much abused lord," and he, "I may leap, Like a hand-wolf, into my natural wildness" (lines 190–200); and the last three speeches in general with Amintor's "My frozen soul melts," and "My honour falls no farther: I am well, then"; and with Evadne's "tales" that "go to dust forgotten,"—the Niobe weeping till she is water,—the "wash her stains away," and

> All the creatures
> Made for Heaven's honours, have their ends, *and good ones,*—
> All but the cozening crocodiles, false women—
> They reign here like those plagues, those killing sores,
> Men pray against; . . .

this remainder belongs, in verse no less than in diction, to the scene as Fletcher originally wrote it.

When to these two scenes we add the first and third of Act V, which are of no particular significance, and the second (to the death of the King), we have Fletcher's whole written contribution to this wonderful tragedy. In the murder of the King he displays

dramatic mastery of the grisly and shuddering; but though the scene is characterized by the same rapidity of conversational thrust and parry as the Fletcherian dialogue between Melantius and Evadne, it is, like it, marred in effect by violence physical rather than spiritual, by brutality of vituperation and stage realism with but scant relief of subtlety. Fletcher's tragic scenes excel not in portrayal of personality but in business; his contribution to Aspatia is not pathos but the embroidery of grief.

The volume and essential vitality are Beaumont's: the cruel desertion of Aspatia, her lyric self-obliteration and desperate rush on fate; the artful revelation of Evadne's character, of her duplicity, her effrontery, her shamelessness; the stirrings of a soul within her, its gradual recognition of the inevitable,— that unchastity cannot be atoned even by vengeance, nor cleansed by blood,— and its true birth through love desired to love achieved in death; the bewilderment of the innocent but shuffling hero, blinded by circumstance and besotted by loyalty to the lustful author of his wrongs,— yet idealized by virgin and wanton alike; the spiritual elevation of Melantius, and the conflict between honour and friendship, pride and sacrifice, which ennobles the comradeship of that blunt soldier with the deluded Amintor; the pestilent King; and Calianax, the poltroon whose braggadocio is part humorous and part cunning, but all helpless and hopeless. These are Beaumont's; and his, too, the wealth of dramatic situation and device: the enthralling exposition, the silver sound and ecstasy of the masque in the first act; the shrewd development of mo-

tive, and the psychic revolutions of movement in the second and third acts; whatever of tenderness or of intricate complication the fourth displays — in fact, all that is not palpable violence. His, the breathless suspense and the swiftly urgent, unexpected sensations that crowd the last scene of the fifth and crown the catastrophe; and his, the gleaming epigram and the poetic finality.

In his *Tragedies of the Last Age,* licensed in 1677, Rymer attacked *The Maides Tragedy* violently for its lack of unity, unnaturalness, improbability of plot, and inconsistency of delineation. Perhaps, as Rymer insisted, the title is a misnomer: perhaps the play might better have been called *Amintor,* or the *Lustful King,* or *The Concubine.* But *The Maides Tragedy* is a more attractive name, and it may be justified. For I do not find that the action is double-centred. It springs entirely out of Amintor's desertion of the Maid for a woman whom he speedily discovers to be 'bed-fellow' to the King. The pathetic devotion of Aspatia is essential to our understanding of Amintor's tragic weakness, his *hamartia.* His failure to act in accordance with the dictates of honour toward Aspatia is prophetic of the indecision that costs him the respect of Evadne, nay extinguishes that first flicker of love which then was but desire. Vile as she was, she would have kissed the sin off from his lips if on their wedding-night he had unquestioningly slain the man to whom she had sold herself. The Nemesis, too, of Amintor is not Evadne nor the King, but Aspatia, thrust out of mind though not forgotten:

I did that lady wrong. Methinks I feel
A griefe shoot suddenly through all my veins,—[1]
. . . . The faithless sin I made
To faire Aspatia is not yet revenged;
It follows me.—[2]

His Nemesis is Aspatia, constant unto death,— and in her death, awakening such remorse that he must die to be with her: "Aspatia!" he cries —

The soule is fled forever, and I wrong
Myselfe so long to lose her company,
Must I talke now? Heres to be with thee, love![3]

Rymer's criticism and that of a recent essayist,[4] of "the irrelevance of the motives that Beaumont employs" in the characterization and conduct of Evadne have logicality of appearance, but are based upon incorrect premises. The facts, as Beaumont gives them, are that Evadne was "once fair" and "chastely sweet,"— before she met the King; that she was already corrupt when she took Amintor as her husband; that her "delicacy of feeling" after the marriage, in presence of her Ladies of the Bedchamber, is an assumed delicacy; that she loves the King "with ambition not with her eyes" (III, i); that she "would bend to any one that won his throne"; that she has accepted Amintor as a screen, but speedily lusts for him, and is willing to give herself to him if he will forthright kill the King (II, i, 179):

[1] II, 1, 127.
[2] III, 1, 221.
[3] V, 3, 244.
[4] P. E. More, *The Nation*, N. Y., April 24, 1913.

> Wilt thou kill this man?
> Sweare, my Amintor, and I'le kisse the sin
> Off from thy lips.

But Amintor is cautious and obliquely conscientious, not the kind of man to satisfy her new desire, and ambition too. He could never win her by winning the throne,— too lily-livered:

"I wonnot sweare, sweet love," says he, "till I do know the cause";—

Then she, with passion "I wood thou wouldst."— But she is a woman whose first behest is scorned; and with sudden revulsion of contempt for this poltroon, as she now conceives him —

> Why, it is *thou* that wrongst me; I hate thee;
> Thou shouldst have kild thy selfe.

Amintor has lost his evil chance. She despises him and yet, in her better moments, with a kind of pity. It follows that her prompt avowal of her liaison, and her return to the King and insulting treatment of Amintor are of a piece with the corrupted nature of the woman,— a nature that she displays up to the moment of her awakening and imagined repentance. The facts are, too, that she does not, immediately after she has sworn to her brother to let the foul soul of the King out, develop (IV, i), as Mr. More thinks, a "mood of sudden and overwhelming love for Amintor." She merely asks his pardon:

> I doe appeare the same, the same Evadne,
> Drest in the shames I liv'd in, the same monster,

But these are names of honour to what I *am*
I am hell
Till you, my deare lord, shoot your light into me,
The beames of your forgivenesse.

The days that she shall number to her rest are short; but she vainly imagines that, though but "one minute" remains, she may "reach constantly at something that is neare" the good. She is awakened to her husband's whiteness of soul; but she makes no profession of love, though love, this time not merely lust, be stirred in her heart. She would not "let her sins perish his noble youth." At last, in the moment of mad exaltation after the murder of the King, when she thinks that she has washed her soul clean in that blood, the poor, misguided creature struggling toward the light, but still, and consistently, enveloped in the murk of her past, comes imploring the love of the husband whom in the earlier days she had scorned. She is still the passionate Evadne, who "was too foule within to looke faire then," and "was not free till now." Repulsed by Amintor, she dreams the one sane madness of her career,— to win his love by taking leave of life,— and kills herself.

I perceive no irrelevance of motive in the conduct of Evadne; even in the scenes which are not Beaumont's — namely, the expostulation of her brother, and the murder of the King. Nor do I find in the play as a whole what Mr. More calls an "incomprehensible tangle of the passions."

The defect in the construction of the *Maides Tragedy,* if there is one, lies in the failure of the Maid and her deserter to meet between the first scene of

the second act and the third of the fifth. That is not unmotived, however; it is of Aspatia's own choosing and of Amintor's *hamartia.* Aspatia kisses him farewell, forgiving him, and saying that she "must trie Some yet unpractis'd way to grieve and die." He is, forthwith, entangled in the web of his wife's adultery, his own shame and more shameful delusion of allegiance. The girl whom he has so deeply wronged passes from his distracted consciousness, save for the sense that these troubles are his punishment. And when, toward the end of the play, the Maid comes in again, saying "this is my fatall houre," even we start at the remembrance that she had threatened to kill herself. And, because the scene in which she forces a duel upon Amintor is spirited and pathetic, his contrition poignant, and the joy of their reunion in the moment of death deeply tragic, we feel that we have been unduly cheated of the company of this innocent and resolute and surpassingly pathetic girl.

The play, with Burbadge in the rôle of Melantius, was popular during the lives of the authors. It was acted before the King and Queen in 1636 and it held the stage until the closing of the theatres. It was revived in 1660 and 1661. Pepys saw it at least five times before the middle of May 1668, and found it "too sad and melancholy" but still "a good play." It was popular when Dryden in his *Essay on Dramatick Poesy,* 1668, praised its "labyrinth of design." For a time during the reign of Charles II it was proscribed, possibly because the moral was too readily applicable to the conduct of the "merry monarch"; but the play in its original form was on the stage again

by 1677. Before 1685 Waller made at least two attempts to change it from tragedy to tragicomedy by writing a new fifth act in which Evadne was bloodlessly eliminated. In one of these sentimental absurdities the King alone survived; in another the King, preposterously reformed, succeeded in saving Amintor and Aspatia from suicide and joined them in marriage: but neither attempt, though made "to please the Court," was crowned with success. The play enjoyed several other revivals in the first half of the eighteenth century with high popularity, notably at the Haymarket in 1706 when Melantius was played by Betterton, Evadne by Mrs. Barry, and Aspatia by Mrs. Bracegirdle; and again in 1710 just before Betterton's death. In 1742 Theobald writes, that the famous controversy between Melantius and Amintor is always "received with vehement applause." In 1837 the play was acted by Macready at the Haymarket, with alterations by himself and three original scenes by Sheridan Knowles, under the name of *The Bridal,* and, as Dyce tells us, was very favourably received by the public.[1]

9.— Though the tragedy of *Cupid's Revenge* was printed in 1615 as the work of Fletcher alone, the publication was unauthorized, and the attribution is by a printer who acknowledges that he was not acquainted with the author. The quarto of 1630 assigns it correctly to Beaumont and Fletcher. The

[1] The best editions of *M. T.,* since the time of Dyce, are those of P. A. Daniel, in the *Variorum* (1904), Glover and Waller, in the *Cambridge English Classics* (1905), and A. H. Thorndike, in the *Belles Lettres* (1906).

play is known to have been acted at Court by her Majesty's Children of Whitefriars, the first Sunday in January 1612; and as usual it must have been tested by public presentation before that date. The fact that the authors were, between 1610 and 1612, writing for the King's Men does not preclude their composing a play for the Queen's Children. It is not, therefore, necessary to date the writing earlier than 1611. Though the critics disagree concerning the precise division of authorship in nearly every scene, finding traces of alteration by Field, Massinger, and others, they discern a definite substratum of both Fletcher and Beaumont. It is unnecessary to specify the minor scenes in which Beaumont coöperated. The five which transfer the action from an atmosphere of supernatural caprice and sordid irresponsibility to the realm of character, moral struggle, pathos, or passion are by him.[1] In these his sententious sunbursts, his verse, diction, hyperbole, portrayal by passive implication, are indubitable. The infatuation of the princess for the dwarf takes on a human interest in the grim humility and cackling mirth of the latter. The lust of Leucippus is transfigured to nobility by his loyalty to oaths "bestowed on lies," by his horror of the discovered baseness of his paramour, and the piety with which he implores that she-devil to spare his father's honour:

> I desire you
> To lay what trains you will for my wish'd death,
> But suffer him to find his quiet grave
> In peace.

[1] I, 3; II, 2; III, 2; IV, 1; V, 4.

The treacherous greed and malice of Bacha are tempered by half-lights and shifting hues that make her less a vampire when Beaumont depicts her. And the final scene of tragedy in the forest is shot with pathos by the "harmless innocence" of Beaumont's Urania following Leucippus to save him

> for love:—
> I would not let you know till I was dying;
> For you could not love me, my mother was so naught.

But the play as a whole lacks logical and natural motive, moral vigor and vitality; and its history upon the stage is negligible.

10.— Of the dates of *A King and No King* there is no doubt. It was licensed in 1611, acted at Court December 26 of the same year, and first published in quarto in 1619 as by Beaumont and Fletcher. In the commendatory verses of 1647, Henry Howard gives Arbaces to Fletcher; Jasper Mayne gives him Bessus; Herrick goes further: "that high design Of *King and No King,* and the rare plot thine." Earle, on the other hand, gives Bessus to Beaumont; and Lisle gives him Mardonius. Of the attributions to Fletcher, Herrick's alone has plausibility, since, like *Philaster* and *The Maides Tragedy,* the play is derived from no known source.[1] Still he was probably wrong. It is not impossible that one of the dramatists contrived the plot; but, considering that three-quarters of the play was written by Beaumont, and that Flet-

[1] For conjectural sources see Chapter VII, above. The best editions to-day are the *Variorum* and Alden's (*Belles Lettres*).

cher's quarter contains but one scene at once of high design and vital to the story, it is not very likely that the contriving was by Fletcher unaided.

Modern critics display singular unanimity in their discrimination of the respective shares of the composers. With only one or two dissenting voices they attribute to Beaumont the first three acts, the fourth scene of the fourth, and scenes two and four of the fifth. To Fletcher they assign the first three scenes of the fourth act, and scenes one and three of the fifth. The tests which I have already described lead me to the same conclusion. Beaumont's contribution is distinguished by a largeness of utterance and a poetic inevitability, a diversity and mastery of characterization, a philosophical reach, a realism both humorous and terrible, and a power of dramatic creativity and tension, equal to, if not surpassing, any parallel elements or qualities to be found in the joint-plays. Arbaces, in apparent design, is of a Marlowan temper, moody, vainglorious, blinded by self-love, and brooking no rebuke; but he is not merely a braggart and a tyrant, he is brave in fact, and in heart deluded by the assumption that he is also modest. The combination is Beaumontesque. That dramatist rarely creates fixed or transparent character. Arbaces assumes that he is single of nature and aim: an irresistible, passionless, and patient soldier; but his failure to fathom himself as his friend Mardonius fathoms him, is part of his complexity. His headlong love for the woman whom he believes to be his sister and the resulting horror of apprehension and conflict of desire reveal him in many-sided dilatation and in swift-succeeding

revolutions of personality. "What are thou," he asks of this devilish unexpected lust —

> What are thou, that dost creep into my breast;
> And dar'st not see my face?

When he will decree that Panthea be regarded as no more his sister, and she remonstrates,— he thunders "I will hear no more"; but to himself: —

> Why should there be such music in a voice,
> And sin for me to hear it?

When Tigranes, to whom he has offered that sister in marriage, presumes to address her, with what majestic inconsistency the king rebukes him:

> The least word that she speaks
> Is worth a life. Rule your disorder'd tongue
> Or I will temper it!

And so, now struggling, now wading on in sin, till that heart-rending crisis is reached in which he confesses the incestuous love to his friend and faithful general, Mardonius; nay, even tries to win the friend's support in his lustful suit, and is gloriously defeated. Then follow the easy compliance of Bessus with his wish, and, with equal precipitancy, the revulsion of a kingly sense of rectitude against the willing pander:

> Thou art too wicked for my company,
> Though I have hell within me, and mayst yet
> Corrupt me further,

The climax in which Arbaces can no longer refrain is of Beaumont's best:

> Nay, you shall hear the cause in short, Panthea;
> And when thou hear'st it, thou will blush for me
> And hang thy head down like a violet
> Full of the morning's dew.

And she, recoiling, "Heaven forbid" and "I would rather . . . in a grave sleep with my innocence," still kisses him; and then in a panic, nobler than self-suppression, cries:

> If you have any mercy, let me go
> To prison, to my death, to anything:
> I feel a sin growing upon my blood
> Worse than all these!

By a series of sensational *bouleversements,* and in a dramatic agony of suspense, we are keyed to the scene in which relief is granted: the princess who now is Queen is no sister to the King, who is now no King.

With the exception of a half-scene (Act IV, 2^b) of somewhat bustling mechanism and rant by Fletcher, the whole of the King's portrayal is Beaumont's; and with the exception of eighty lines written by Fletcher (Act IV, 1) of dramatic dialogue containing information necessary to the minor love-affair, the story of the birdlike quivering, fond Panthea is, also, entirely Beaumont's. The Mardonius of Beaumont, in the first three acts and the fifth, is a fine, honest, blunt, soldierly companion and adviser to the King; but when Fletcher takes him in hand (Act IV, 2^b), he declines to a stock character wordy with alliteration and commonplace. The Bessus of Beaumont whose "reputation came principally by thinking to run away" is, in Acts I–III, Falstaffian or

Zagloban; the Bessus of Fletcher, in IV, 3 and V, 1 and 3, is a figure of low comedy, amusing to be sure, and reminiscent of Bobadill, but a purveyor of sophomoric quips and a tool for horse-play. The rural scene with its graphic humours of the soil is Beaumont's.

Fletcher's slight contribution to this otherwise masterly play consists, in brief, of facile dramatic dialogue, rhetorical ravings, stop-gaps complementary to the plot, and farce unrelated to it. His scenes display no spiritual insight; supply no development of character; administer no dramatic fillip to the action and no thrill to the spectator; and, exclusive of one rhetorically-coloured colloquy between the minor lovers, Tigranes and Spaconia, they are devoid of poetry.

To Beaumont, then, it may be said that we owe in the creation of *A King and No King* one of the most intensely powerful dramas of the Jacobean period, one of the most popular in the age of Dryden, and one of the most influential in the development of the heroic play of the Restoration. That it did not survive the eighteenth century is due not so much to the painful nature of the conflict presented as to the fact that it is "of that inferior sort of tragedies which" as Dryden says "end with a prosperous event." The conflict of motives, the passions aroused, have overpassed the limits of artistic mediation. The play would better have ended in a catastrophe of undeserved suffering — that highest kind of tragedy, inevitable and inexplicable. But though this be a spoiled tragedy, it is not, as many assert, an immoral tragicomedy. That error arises from a careless reading of the text. From

the first, the spectator is led to divine that the protagonists are not brother and sister. And as for the protagonists themselves,— when the King is suddenly smitten by love (III, i, 70–115) and rebels against its power, he does not even know that the object of his devotion is his supposed sister. When he is informed that the conquering beauty is Panthea, he revolts, crying "'t is false as Hell!" And when the twain are enmeshed in the strands of circumstance they cease not to recognize the liberating possibility of self-denial. In his struggle against what seems to him incestuous love, though the King does not conquer, he, still, not for a moment loses the consciousness of what is right. His deepest despair is that he is "not come so high as killing" himself rather than succumb to worse temptation; and his last word before the tragic knot is cut is of loathing for "such a strange and unbelieved affection as good men cannot think on." And when Panthea feeling the "sin growing upon her blood," learns the irony of high resolve throttled by infirmity, it is still her soul, unstrangled, that cries to him whom she thinks her brother, "Fly, sir, for God's sake!"

A King and No King evidently won favour at Court, for, as we have noticed, it was acted there both in 1611 and in 1612–1613. It was presented to their Majesties at Hampton Court in 1636. In 1661 Pepys saw it twice. Before 1682 Nell Gwynn had made Panthea one of her principal rôles. In 1683 Betterton played Arbaces to Mrs. Barry's Panthea. It was revived again in 1705, 1724, and 1788. Davies in his *Dramatic Miscellany* tells us that Garrick intended

to revive it, taking the part of Arbaces himself and giving Bessus to Woodward, "but it was observed that at every reading of it in the green-room Garrick's pleasure suffered a visible diminution — at length he fairly gave up his design." Mr. Bond, in the *Variorum* edition, mentions a German adaptation of 1785, called *Ethelwolf, oder der König Kein König.*

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LAST PLAY

ELEVEN.—The first quarto of *The Scornful Ladie,* entered S. R., March 19, 1616, assigns the play to Beaumont and Fletcher, and says that it "was acted with great applause by the Children of Her Maiesties Revels in the Blacke Fryers." The references in Act V, 3, 4, to the Cleve wars show that it could not have been written before March 25, 1609. The sentence, "Marry some cast Cleve captain," is taken by some to indicate a date as early as the spring of that year, when James I "promised to send an English force to aid the Protestant party," [1] and when, undoubtedly, "cast" captains of the English army were clamouring for foreign service. In that case, the play was acted before January 4, 1610, for by that date the children of the Queen's Revels had ceased playing at Blackfriars. Since the plague regulations closed the theatres between March 9 and December 7, 1609, save for a week in July, these arguments would fix the performance in the Christmas month, December 7 to January 4, 1610. To this supposition a reference in Act I, 2 to binding the Apocrypha by itself, lends plausibility, if, as Fleay thinks, the sentence points

[1] Murray, *Eng. Dram. Comp.*, I, 153; Warwick Bond, *Variorum Ed. of B. and F.*, I, 359.

to the discussion during 1609–1610 concerning the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the Douay version of the Bible and its exclusion from the authorized version — both in progress at the time, and both completed in 1610.[1] But the Apocrypha controversy was continued long after 1610.

A later date of composition than January 4, 1610, is, however, indicated if a line, III, 1, 341, to which attention has not previously been directed, in which the Elder Loveless says of Abigail, who is acting the termagant, "tie your she-Otter up, good Lady folly, she stinks worse than a Bear-baiting," was suggested by the termagant Mrs. Otter and her husband of the Bear-garden, in Jonson's *Epicoene,* acted between January 4 and March 10, 1610. And the two sentences in which Cleve is mentioned, "There will be no more talk of the Cleve wars while this lasts" (V, 3), and "Marry some *cast Cleve* captain [so italicized in the quarto], and sell Bottle-ale" (V, 4), point to a date later than July 1610, when actual fighting in Cleves-Juliers had barely begun. The captains are not English soldiers seeking service in a foreign army not yet mobilized, but Englishmen who have been captains in Cleves, have seen service, and been 'cast,' any time between July 1610 and the beginning of 1616, when, according to the quarto, the play had assuredly been performed. These considerations make it probable that *The Scornful Ladie* in its original form was presented first at Whitefriars while the Queen's Children were acting there, between 1610 and March 1613, or that it was one of the plays, old

[1] *Chr. Eng. Dr.,* I, 181.

or new, presented by the Queen's Children (reorganized in 1614) when they opened at Rossiter's new Blackfriars in 1615–16.

Since active hostilities in Cleves were temporarily suspended in 1613–14 during the negotiations which led to the treaty of Xanten in November of the latter year, and since there would not only be much "talk" rather than fighting at the time, but also many captains 'cast' from their regiments, the conviction grows that the play was written between 1613 and the end of 1615. If *The Scornful Ladie* had been written before March 1613, it would undoubtedly have shared with *The Coxcombe* and *Cupid's Revenge* of the same authors, then in the flush of popularity at Court, the honour of presentation by the Queen's Revels' Children during the festivities attending the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth; for it was always a good acting play, and it has far greater merit than *Cupid's Revenge* which the Children performed three times before royalty in the four months preceding the marriage.

Other evidence, not hitherto noticed, still further confirms the conclusion that this was one of Beaumont and Fletcher's later joint-productions, perhaps the last of them. The conversational style is altogether more mature than in the remaining output of their partnership. It is the first work published under both of their names, and it was licensed for publication within two weeks after Beaumont's death, as one might expect of a play with which he was associated recently in the public mind. It is the only one of the joint-plays which he did not himself copy out, or thoroughly revise in manuscript, eliminating all or

nearly all of Fletcher's distinctive *ye's* and *y' are's*, and reducing to uniformity the nomenclature of the *dramatis personae*. Of this, later. There is also a sentence in Act III, 2, which points definitely to a date of composition, 1613 to 1615. The Captain speaking to Morecraft, the usurer, says, "I will stile thee nobile, nay Don Diego, I'le woo thy Infanta for thee" (punctuation of the quarto). 'Diego' had, of course, been for years a generic nickname for Spaniards; but Morecraft is neither a Spaniard nor in any way associated with Spaniards. There had been a Don Diego of maledolorous memory, who had offensively "perfumed" St. Paul's and on whose achievement the Elizabethans never wearied ringing the changes.[1] But that Don Diego was of the years before 1607 when there was, of course, no talk of wooing an Infanta; and the Captain here who comes to borrow money of the usurer had no intention of insulting him by likening him to the disgusting Spaniard of St. Paul's.

The only provocation for styling Morecraft's 'widow' an Infanta in this scene of *The Scornful Ladie* is that there was much interest in London at the time in a proposed marriage between Charles, Prince of Wales, and the second daughter of Philip III of Spain, the Infanta Maria. And the conjunction of the "Infanta" with a "Don Diego" has reference to the activities of the astute Don Diego Sarmiento de Acuna who had arrived as Spanish ambas-

[1] See Ben Jonson, *Variorum*, *B. and F.*, I, 417; and references as given there, and to Dyce, to *The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, *The Captain*, and other plays.

sador, in 1613, "with the express object of winning James over from his alliance with France and the Protestant powers."[1] During 1613 Queen Anne was favouring the Spanish marriage. In February 1614, Don Diego Sarmiento was sedulously cultivating the acquaintance of the King's powerful minion, the Earl of Somerset; and in May he was writing home of his success. In the latter month, the Lord Privy Seal, Northampton, was urging the marriage upon the King; and the King soon after had signified to Sarmiento his willingness to accept the hand of the Infanta for Charles, provided Philip of Spain should withdraw his demand for the conversion of the young prince to Catholicism. In June Sarmiento was advising Philip to close with James's offer. And a month or so later the Spanish Council of State had voted in favour of the match. Negotiations, broken off for a time, were resumed a few weeks after the treaty of Xanten was signed; and with varying success Don Diego was still pursuing his object in December 1615. The reference in *The Scornful Ladie* cannot possibly be to negotiations for the marriage of Prince Charles's elder brother, Henry, who died in 1612, with one or the other of King Philip's daughters;[2] as for instance in 1604 or 1607, for the Cleves wars had not then begun; or in 1611 and 1612, for no Don Diego had yet arrived in England. The upper limit of the reference

[1] See S. R. Gardiner, *History of England*, Vol. II (1607-1616), pp. 165, 218, 225, 247, 255, 316, 321, 324, 327, 368, for this and the following concerning Sarmiento.

[2] Gardiner, *Prince Charles and the Spanish Marriage*, pp. 6, 7, 69.



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DON DIEGO SARMIENTO,
COUNT GONDOMAR
From the portrait by G. P. Harding

to Don Diego Sarmiento's negotiations is May 27, 1613. Gardiner tells us, moreover, that "for some time" before Diego was created Count Gondomar in 1617 "he had been pertinaciously begging for a title that would satisfy the world that his labours had been graciously accepted by his master." This desire to be "stiled noble" was undoubtedly known to many about the Court. If Beaumont and Fletcher did not hear of it by common talk, they might readily have derived their information from Don Diego's acquaintance and Beaumont's friend, Sir Francis Bacon, Attorney-General at the time, or from a devoted companion of John Selden of the Inner Temple, Sir Robert Cotton, the antiquary, who in April 1615, was King James's intermediary with Sarmiento. Taking, accordingly, all these considerations into account in conjunction with the fact that no Cleves captains had yet been 'cast' from their commands abroad before the Queen's Revels' Children ceased playing at the old Blackfriars in January 1610, I have come to the definite conclusion that the play was written between May 27, 1613 and the beginning of 1616, and first acted after the Children reopened at the new Blackfriars in 1615–1616. The probabilities are that it was written after May or June, 1614, perhaps, as late as April 1615, when public attention had been startlingly awakened to Don Diego's personal and ambitious activity in furthering the Spanish alliance by a royal marriage; and that Beaumont's absence from London, probably at his wife's place in Kent, or the failing condition of his health, accounts for his subordinate share in the authorship, as well as for the incomplete

revision of the text — a task evidently assumed by him in the preparation of the other plays planned and produced in partnership with Fletcher.

The commendatory verses of Stanley and Waller in the 1647 folio give the play to Fletcher; and the greater part of it is Fletcher's. Beaumont has contributed the vivid exposition of Act I, 1; Act I, 2, with its legal phraseology and racy realism; and the jovial posset-scene of Act II, 1, where Sir Roger's kindly pedantry is developed and the minor love-affair of Welford and Martha is introduced.[1] Act II, 1, has been given by most critics to Fletcher because of the feminine endings of its occasional verse; but Beaumont could use feminine endings for humorous effect and the diction and metal habit are distinctly his. He contributed also Act V, 2,[2] where the hero finally tricks his scornful mistress into submission. The test, which I have said does not yield results in the case of other plays written by the two dramatists in collaboration, is of positive value here as confirming Beaumont's authorship of Act I, 1 and 2 and Act V, 1, and V, 2, for but a single *ye* (II, 1, l. 10) is to be found in those scenes. The results are negative in Act II, 2 and 3 — no *ye's* — but the diction and verse are Fletcher's. It is not unlikely that Beaumont revised the play up to the end of Act II. With Act III, *ye's* are in evidence and continue to the end of the play, except in Beaumont's V, 2. In Act III, 1, there are but four; but two of them are in the objec-

[1] All critics agree in assigning I, i, to Beaumont. They differ concerning the rest of I and II.

[2] So, also, Fleay, G. C. Macaulay, and Oliphant; Boyle, *N. Trans.*, XXVI (1886), and Bond, *u. s.*, p. 360.

case, a mark of Fletcher, not of Beaumont. On the other hand though the diction and verse somewhat resemble Fletcher's, the infrequency of the *ye's* heightens the suspicion that unless the scene is Fletcher's, revised imperfectly by Beaumont, it is the work of some third author — perhaps, as R. W. Bond,[1] has suggested, Massinger. Act III, 2, on the other hand, not only has several *ye's* in the objective, but in proportion to the *you's* twenty-five per cent of *ye's* and *y' are's,* which appproaches the distinctive habit of Fletcher; and the verse, rhetorical triplets, and afterthoughts are his. In all scenes of Acts IV and V, except the second of the latter, Fletcher's *ye's* occur, not in great number, but often enough in the objective case to corroborate the other, metrical and stylistic, indications of his authorship.

I have said that no *ye's* occur in Acts I and II, and Act V, 2, the parts in which Beaumont's hand as author or reviser appears. Another very interesting confirmation of his authorship of Act I, 1, Act II, 1, and Act V, 2, is afforded by the double nomenclature of one of the characters, the amorous spinster who serves as waiting-woman to the Scornful Lady. According to the first three quartos (1616, 1625, 1630), and the folio (1679) which follows the text of these, whenever she appears in stage-direction or text before the beginning of Act III (viz., in Beaumont's scenes), she is called Mistress Younglove or Younglove, but in Acts III, IV, V, she is uniformly called Abigal, except in Beaumont's V, 2, where in the text and stage-direction (line 263) she is again Younglove. In the

[1] *Variorum,* I, 360.

speech-headings, she is Abig. or Abi., all through the last three acts, for Fletcher has noticed that the abbreviation Young. for her, occurring by the side of Young Lo. for another character, Young Loveless, is confusing. But Beaumont, who revised the first two acts, has been less careful than his wont, for he occasionally retains the Young., which stood for the name by which he always thought of the waiting-woman.

Beaumont's Mistress Younglove of the earlier scenes is vividly vulgar and amorous. Fletcher takes her up and turns her into a commonplace stage lecher in petticoats; but Beaumont, in the fifth act, restores her to womanhood by giving her something of a heart. The Scornful Lady of Beaumont's scenes is self-possessed and many-sided, introspective and capable of affection. In Fletcher's hands she is shrewd and witty but evidently constructed for the furtherance of dramatic business. The steward, Savil, of Beaumont's Act I, appears not only to be honest but to be designed with a view to a leading part in the complication; in Act II, 2, Fletcher reduces him to drunkenness and servility, with slight regard to the possibilities of character and plot. The brisk but mechanical movement of the action and the stagey characterization and more animated scenes are Fletcher's; also the manœuvers directed against the Lady's attitude of scorn, except that by which she is overcome. Thorndike calls this comedy "perhaps the best representation of the collaboration" of these dramatists in that kind. If this is the best of which they were capable in that kind, it is as well that they did not produce more. This was written after Beaumont had retired to Sun-

dridge Place, and was giving very little attention to play-writing. It was, however, a very popular play; frequently acted before suppression of the theatres, and in the decade succeeding the Restoration when it was several times witnessed by Pepys. Later, it was acted by Mrs. Oldfield; and, as *The Capricious Lady* (an alteration by W. Cooke), with Mrs. Abington in the heroine's part, it held the stage as late as 1788 — some six revivals in all. But, as Sir Adolphus Ward says, it is "coarse both in design and texture, and seems hardly entitled to rank high among English comedies." It undoubtedly suggested ideas for Massinger's tragicomedy, *A Very Woman,* licensed 1634, but in which Fletcher may have had a share; and for Sir Aston Cockayne's *The Obstinate Lady* of 1657.[1]

[1] The best editions of *The Scornful Ladie* since Dyce's time are that of R. Warwick Bond, in the *Variorum,* and of Glover and Waller in the *Camb. Engl. Classics.*

CHAPTER XXVII

THE DRAMATIC ART, PRINCIPALLY OF BEAUMONT

OF the eleven plays, then, from which one may try to draw conclusions concerning the respective dramatic qualities of Beaumont and Fletcher during the period of their collaboration, we have found that two, *Loves Cure* and *The Captaine,* do not definitely show the hand of Beaumont, and one, *The Foure Playes,* but the suspicion of a finger. Two, *The Woman-Hater* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* are wholly or essentially of his unaided authorship. The remaining six, *The Coxcombe, Philaster, The Maides Tragedy, Cupids Revenge, A King and No King, The Scornful Ladie,* are the Beaumont-Fletcher plays. Others in which some critics think that they have found traces of Beaumont, assuming that in their present form they are revisions of earlier work, are *Thierry and Theodoret, The Faithful Friends, Wit at Severall Weapons, Beggers Bush, Loves Pilgrimage, The Knight of Malta, The Lawes of Candy, The Honest Man's Fortune, Bonduca, Nice Valour, The Noble Gentleman, The Faire Maide of the Inn.* These I have carefully examined, and can conscientiously state that in no instance is there for me satisfactory evidence of the qualities which mark his verse and style. When in any of the suspected pa

sages the verse recalls Beaumont, the style is not his: I find none of his favourite words, phrases, figures, ideas. When in any such passage a Beaumontesque hyperbole appears, or an occasional word from his vocabulary, or a line of haunting beauty such as he might have written, his metre or rhythm is absent. On the other hand, such passages display traits never found in him but often found in some other collaborator with Fletcher, or in some reviser of Fletcher's plays, sometimes Massinger but more frequently Field. The latter dramatist modeled himself upon Beaumont, but though he caught, on occasion, something of the master's trick, no one steeped in the style of Beaumont can for a moment mistake for his even the most dramatic or poetic composition of Field. As to the scenes in prose supposed by some to have been written by Beaumont, there is not one that bears his distinctive impress, nor one that might not have been written by Daborne, Field, or Massinger, or by any of the half-dozen experts whose industry swelled the output of the Fletcherian syndicate. There being no evidence of Beaumont in any of these plays, it is unnecessary to investigate, here, the vexed question of the original date of each. Suffice it to repeat that concerning none is there definite or generally accepted information that it was written before Beaumont's retirement from dramatic activity.

Passing in review, the qualities of Beaumont as a dramatist we find that in characterization he is, when at his best, true to nature, gradual in his processes, and discriminating in delineation. He is melodramatic at times in sudden shifts of crisis; but he is uni-

formly sensitive to innocence, beauty, and pathos,— contemptuous of cowardice, braggadocio, and insincerity,— appreciative of fidelity, friendship, noble affection, womanly devotion, self-sacrifice, and mercy, of romantic enterprise, and of the virile defiance of calumny, evil soliciting, and tyranny. In the delineation of lust he is frankly Elizabethan rather than insidiously Jacobean. He portrays with special tenderness the maiden of pure heart whose love is unfortunately placed too high, a Bellario, Euphrasia, or Urania,— or crossed by circumstance, a Viola, Arethusa, Aspatia, Panthea. He distinctively appropriates Shakespeare's girl-page; under his touch her grace suffers but slight diminution, and that by excess of sentimentality rather than by lack of individual endowment. His love-lorn lasses are integral personalities. No one, not maintaining a thesis, could mistake Viola with her shrewd inventiveness and sense of humour for Arethusa, or Arethusa with her swift despairs for Bellario, or Bellario with her fearlessness and noble mendacity for the countrified Urania, or any of them for the lachrymose Aspatia, or the full-pulsed Panthea. I find them as different each from the other as all from the tormenting Oriana or that seventeenth century Lydia Languish, Jasper's mock-romantic Luce.

His most virile characters are not the tragic or romantic heroes of the plays, but the blunt soldier-friends. It has been said, to be sure, that "there is scarcely an individual peculiarity among them." [1] But Mardonius never deserts his King, Melantius does.

[1] Thorndike, *Influence of B. and F.*, p. 123.

And neither the Mardonius nor the Melantius of Beaumont has the waggish humour of Beaumont's Dion. His romantic heroes, on the other hand, are not so distinct in their several characteristics; Amintor, Philaster, Leucippus are generous, impulsive, poetic, readily deluded, undecided, and in action indecisive. The differentiation between them lies in the dramatic motive. Of Amintor the mainspring is the doctrine of the divinity of kings; he cannot be disloyal even to the king who has duped him and made of him a "fence" for his wife's adultery. Of Leucippus the mainspring is filial piety — disloyalty would mean surrendering his father to an incestuous and vengeful woman. Of Philaster the mainspring is the duty of revolt for the recovery of his ancestral throne. In *Philaster* and *Cupid's Revenge* Beaumont's tyrants are sonorific yet shadowy forms; but the king of the *Maides Tragedy* is a thoroughly visualized monster, and Arbaces in *A King and No King* stands as an epitome of progressively developed, concrete personality, absolutely distinct from any other figure on Beaumont's stage. In the construction of Evadne and Bacha a similar skill in evolution and individualization is displayed. The latter is an abnormality grown from lust to overweening ambition; the former never loses our sympathy: in her depravity there is the seed of conscience; through shame and love she wins a soul; the crime by which at last she would redeem herself leaves her no longer futile but half-way heroic; and her pleading for Amintor's love, her self-murder, fix her in memory among those squandered souls that have known no happiness — whose misery or whose

ne is merged and made beautiful in the pity of

.

f his braggarts and poltroons Beaumont is pro
: the best are Bessus and Calianax, so far as they
not been reduced to horse-play by another hand
Pharamond we are indebted as much to Fletcher
Beaumont. The Jonsonian humours of Beau
t's braggarts, excellent as they may be, are not
clearly marked nor better drawn than those of
y of his other characters, the misogynist, the
butive Oriana, and the gourmand parasite, in his
hful comedy of *The Woman-Hater*, or the clerical
care Merrythought, Luce, the grocer and his
, and in fact every convulsing caricature in his
hless *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Of Beau
t's effectiveness in satire and burlesque, enough
already been said. His laughter is genial but not
arious: he chuckles; he hits the cyclops, but sel
sneers. With the Gascon he vapours; with the
born languishing, simpers; with the heroic Cap
of Mile End, whittles and tongue in cheek
and throws a turkey step, with the jovial host
he hiccoughs and wipes his mouth. Homely wit,
s, and the grotesque he traces as on a film, and
s no comment; fustian he parodies; affectation
eds with banter. For the inflated he sketches a
dless, most exiguous bodkin.

s to the matter of technique we have observed
the clear and comprehensive expositions of the
-plays are generally Beaumont's, for instance,
of *The Maides Tragedy*, *Philaster*, *King and No
g*, and *The Scornful Ladie*; that in the tragedies

and tragicomedies the sensational reversals of fortune, as well as the cumulative suspenses and reliefs of the closing scenes, are in nearly all cases his; and that in the tragicomedies the shifting of interest from the strictly tragic and universal to the more individual pathetic, romantic, and comic — emotions, is also his. The conviction of Evadne by her brother is an exception: that is the work of Fletcher; but her contrition in the presence of Amintor is again Beaumont's. What he was capable of in romantic comedy is shown by his '*Ricardo and Viola*' episode. He cared much more for romance than for intrigue; and he found his romance in persons of common life as readily as among those of elevated station. In his share of the comedies of intrigue he shows, as elsewhere, that he was capable of Elizabethan bubukles, but ludicrous not lecherous. Above all, he delighted in interweaving with the romantic and sentimental that which partook of the pastoral, the pathetic, and the heroic. And we have noticed that, through the heroic and melodramatic, his more serious plays pass into the atmosphere of court life and spectacular display.

As for Fletcher's share in the dramas written in partnership with Beaumont, little need be said by way of summary. He bulks large in the comedies of intrigue, *The Scornful Ladie* and *The Coxcombe;* and especially in the sections of plot that are carnal, trivial, or unnatural. He is in them just what he is in his own *Monsieur Thomas* and his pornographic *Captaine* — in the latter of which, if Beaumont had any hare at all it is unconvincing to me, save possibly as regards the one appalling scene of which I have

spoken some five chapters back. To the tragedies and "dramatic romances" or tragicomedies Fletcher did not contribute one-third as much as his co-worker. As in the murder-scene of *The Maides Tragedy* he displays the dramaturgy of spectacular violence, so in the scene between Melantius and Evadne, the power of dramatic invective. But his aim is not the furtherance of interest by the dynamic unfolding of personality, or by the propulsion of plot through interplay of complicated motives or emotions, it is the immediate captivation of the spectator by rapidity and variety: by brisk, lucid, and witty dialogue, by bustle of action and multiplicity of conventional device, as in *Cupids Revenge*. Few of his scenes are vital; most are clever histrionic inlays, subsidiary to the main action, or complementary and explanatory, as in *Philaster* and *A King and No King*. His characters move with all the ease of perfect mechanism; but they are made, not born. It follows that, in the more serious of the joint-dramas, the principal personages are much less indebted to his invention than has ordinarily been supposed. In the comedies of intrigue, on the other hand, conventional types of the stage or of the theatre-going London world, especially the fashionable and the Bohemian provinces thereof, owe their existence chiefly to him. Blackguards, wittols, colourless tricksters, roaring captains, gallants, debauchees, lechers, bawds, libidinous wives, sophisticated maidens who preen themselves with meticulous virtue but not with virtuous thoughts, all these people the scenes which Fletcher contributed to the joint-comedies. And some of them thrust their faces into

the romantic plays and tragedies as well. Fletcher's most important contribution to the drama, his masterly and vital contribution, is to be found in his later work; and of that I have elsewhere treated,[1] and shall have yet a word to say here.

Of the Beaumont-Fletcher plays the distinctive dramaturgy as well as the essential poetry are Beaumont's, and these are worthy of the praise bestowed by his youthful contemporary, John Earle:

> So new, so fresh, so nothing trod upon,
> And all so born within thyself, thine own.

The Maske, The Woman-Hater, and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* should appear in a volume bearing Beaumont's name. And for the partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher, perhaps, some day,

> Some publisher will further justice do
> And print their *six* plays in one volume too.

[1] *The Fellows and Followers of Shakespeare,* Part Two, in *Representative English Comedies,* Vol. III, now in press.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DID THE BEAUMONT 'ROMANCE' INFLUENCE SHAKESPEARE?

RICHARD FLECKNOE, in his *Discourse of the English Stage,* 1664, thinking rather of the romantic and ornamented quality of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, "full of fine flowers," than of any anticipation in them of the love and honour of plays of the Restoration, says that they were the first to write "in the Heroick way." Symonds calls them the "inventors of the heroical romance." And lately Professor Thorndike [1] and others have conjectured that the Shakespeare of *Cymbeline, Winter's Tale,* and *The Tempest* was following the lead of the two younger dramatists in what is attributed to them as a new style of 'dramatic romance' in his dramas. The argument is that *Philaster* (acted before October 8, 1610) preceded *Cymbeline* (acted between April 20, 1610 and May 15, 1611), and suggested to Shakespeare a radical change of dramatic method, first manifest in *Cymbeline.* And that five other "romances by Beaumont and Fletcher," *Foure Playes in One, Thierry and Theodoret, The Maides Tragedy, Cupid's Revenge* and *A King and No King,* constituting with

[1] *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare,* 1901. See M. W. Sampson's critique in *J. Ger. Phil.,* II, 241.

Philaster a distinctly new type of drama, were in all probability acted before the close of 1611, and similarly influenced the method of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest,* also of 1611.

Before discussing the theory of Shakespeare's indebtedness to *Philaster* and its "Beaumont-Fletcher" successors, I should like to file a two-fold protest; first, against the use of the word 'romance' for any kind of dramatic production, whatever. 'Romance' applies to narrative of heroic, marvellous, and imaginative content, not to drama. *The Maides Tragedy* and *Cupid's Revenge* are not romances; they are romantic tragedies. *Philaster, A King and No King,* and *Cymbeline* are, of course, romantic; but specifically they are melodramatic tragicomedies of heroic cast. *Pericles, The Winter's Tale,* and *The Tempest* are romantic comedies of marvel or adventure. Nothing is gained in criticism by giving them a name which applies, in English, strictly to narrative, or by regarding them as of a different dramatic species from the romantic dramas of Greene and Shakespeare that preceded them. I object, in the second place, to the grouping of the six plays said to constitute "a distinctly new type of drama" under the denomination "dramatic romances of Beaumont *and* Fletcher"; for in some of them Beaumont had no hand, and in others, the most important, Fletcher's contribution of romantic novelty is altogether secondary, mostly immaterial. With *Thierry and Theodoret,* for instance, thus loosely called a "Beaumont-Fletcher romance," it is not proved that Beaumont had anything to do. The drama displays nothing of his vocabulary, rhetoric

or poetry. It is a later production by Fletcher, Massinger, and probably one other; and is the only play of this tragic-idyllic-romantic type attempted by Fletcher after Beaumont had ceased writing. In three of the *Foure Playes in One,* Beaumont does not appear. He may possibly be traced in three scenes of *The Triumph of Love;* but with no certainty. Fletcher, on the other hand, had very little to do with the three great dramas of sensational romance which form the core of the group in question, *Philaster, The Maides Tragedy,* and *A King and No King.* As I have shown, he contributed not more than four scenes to *Philaster,* four to *The Maides Tragedy,* and five to *A King and No King.* And, with the exception of two spectacularly violent scenes in *The Maides Tragedy,* his contribution, so far as writing goes, is supplementary dialogue and histrionic by-play. Whatever is essentially novel, vital, and distinctive is by Beaumont. To *Cupid's Revenge* Beaumont's contribution was slighter in volume, but without it the play would lack its distinctive quality. If we must cling to the misnomer 'romance' for any group of plays which may have influenced Shakespeare's later comedies, let us limit the group to its Beaumont core, and speak of the 'Beaumont romance.'

The express novelty in technique of the six arbitrarily selected, so-called 'Beaumont-Fletcher romances' is supposed to lie in the dramatic adaptation of certain sensational properties more suitable to narrative fiction; especially in the attempt to heighten interest by adding to the legitimate portrayal of character under stress and strain (as in tragedy), or of character in

amusing maladjustment with social convention (as in comedy), the portrayal of vicissitudes of fortune; and in the attempt to enhance the thrills appropriate to tragic and comic appeal by such an amalgamation of the two as shall cause the spectator to run up and down the whole gamut of emotional sensibility. In the realm of tragedy the accentuation of the possibilities of suspense, whether by Beaumont or any other, would be a novelty merely of degree. *Cupid's Revenge,* and *The Triumph of Death* (in the *Foure Playes in One*) could hardly have impressed the author of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* as in this respect astounding innovations; and *The Maides Tragedy* does not, so far as I can determine, sacrifice the unities of interest and effect for enhancement and variety of emotional thrill. In any case, it would be necessary to date *Timon, Antony,* and *Coriolanus,* two or three years later than the fact, if one desired to prove that any Shakespearian tragedy was influenced by a Beaumont-Fletcher exaggeration of suspense. Whatever exaggeration may exist had already been practised by Shakespeare himself. If a Beaumont-Fletcher novelty influenced Shakespeare, that novelty must have lain in the transference of tragic suspense to the realm of romantic comedy with all its minor aesthetic appeals, and it would consequently be limited to their tragicomedies, *Philaster* and *A King and No King.* The tragicomic masques in the *Foure Playes in One,* that of *Honour* and that of *Death,* are too insignificant to warrant consideration; and Beaumont had nothing to do with them.

In determining the indebtedness, if any, of *Cym-*

beline to *Philaster* we lack the assistance of authentic dates of composition. The plays were acted about the same time,— *Philaster* certainly, *Cymbeline* perhaps, before October 8, 1610. Beaumont and Fletcher's play may have been written as early as 1609; Shakespeare's also as early as 1609 or 1608: in fact, there are critics who assign parts of it to 1606. With regard to the relative priority of *Cymbeline* and *A King and No King,* we are more fortunate in our knowledge. The former had certainly been acted by May 15, 1611; the latter was not even licensed until that year, and was not performed at Court till December 26. The probabilities are altogether in favour of a date of composition later than that of *Cymbeline.*

But that Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and his later romantic dramas betray any consciousness of the existence of *Philaster* and its succeeding *King and No King* has not been proved. Save for the more emphatic employment of the masque and its accessories of dress and scenic display, of the combination of idyllic, romantic, and sensational elements of material, and the heightened uncertainty of dénouement, all naturally suggested by the demands of Jacobean taste, no variation is discoverable in the course of Shakespeare's dramatic art. And in these respects I find no extrinsic novelty, no momentous change — nothing in *Philaster* and *A King and No King* that had not been anticipated by Shakespeare. *Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale,* and *The Tempest* are but the flowering of potentialities latent in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *As You Like It, Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night, All's Well That Ends Well*

and *Measure for Measure* — latent in the story of Apollonius of Tyre, and unavoidable in its dramatization as *Pericles,* a play that was certainly not influenced by the methods of *Philaster.* If in his later romantic dramas Shakespeare borrowed any hint of technique from the Beaumont contribution to the 'romances,' he was but borrowing back what Beaumont had borrowed from him or from sources with which Shakespeare was familiar when Beaumont was still playing nursery miracles of the Passion with his brothers in the Gethsemane garden at Grace-Dieu. Shakespeare's later comedies are a legitimate development of his peculiar dramatic art. Beaumont's tragicomedies, with all their poetic and idyllic beauty and dramatic individuality, are novel, so far as construction goes, only in their emphasized employment of the sensational properties and methods mentioned above. Their characteristic, when compared with that of Shakespeare's last group of comedies, is melodramatic rather than romantic. They set, in fine, as did Chapman's *Gentleman Usher,* and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and *All's Well that Ends Well,* an example which, abused, led to the decadence of Elizabethan romantic comedy.

The resemblance between *Philaster* and *Cymbeline,* such as it is, is closer than that between *Philaster* and the Shakespearian successors of *Cymbeline,— The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest.* But the common features of all these plays, the juxtaposition of idyllic scenes and interest with those of royalty, the combination of sentimental, tragic, and comic incentives to emotion, the false accusations of unchastity and the

resulting jealousy, intrigue, and crime, the wanderings of an innocent and distressed woman in boy's clothing, the romantic localization, did not appear first in either *Philaster* or *Cymbeline*. *Philaster* and *Cymbeline* follow numerous clues in the idyllic-comic of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Midsummer-Night's Dream;* in the idyllic-romantic-pathetic of *Two Gentlemen of Verona, As You Like It,* and *Twelfth Night;* and for that matter in the materials furnished by Greene, Lodge, Sidney, Sannazzaro, Montemayor, Bandello, Cinthio and Boccaccio; and in the romantic and tragicomic fusion already attempted in *Much Ado, All's Well,* and *Measure for Measure*. For the character and the trials of Imogen, Shakespeare did not require the inspiration of a Beaumont. He had been busied with the figure of Innogen (as he then called her) as early as 1599; for in the 1600 quarto of *Much Ado* she appears by sheer accident in a stage direction as the wife of the Leonato of that play. He had been using the sources from which *Cymbeline* is drawn,— Holinshed and Boccaccio, and that early romantic drama, *Fidele and Fortunio,*—before *Philaster* was written. And it is much more likely that the Belarius of Shakespeare and the Bellario of Beaumont were both suggested by the Bellaria of Greene's *Pandosto,* than that Shakespeare borrowed from Beaumont. Nor is Shakespeare likely to have been indebted to Beaumont's example for the sensational manner of the dénouement in *Cymbeline* — the succession of fresh complications and false starts by which suspense is sustained. These are precisely the features that distinguish those scenes of *Pericles*

which by the consensus of critics are assigned to Shakespeare; and *Pericles* was written by 1608, at least as early as *Philaster,* and in all probability earlier. In his story of Marina, Shakespeare is merely pursuing the sensational methods of *Measure for Measure* and anticipating those of *The Winter's Tale.* In general, the plot lies half-way between the tragicomic possibilities of the *Comedy of Errors, Twelfth Night, All's Well,* and *Measure for Measure,* and the romantic manipulation of *Cymbeline* and the later plays.

In fine, there is closer resemblance between *Cymbeline* and half a dozen of Shakespeare's earlier comedies, than between *Cymbeline* and *Philaster;* and it might more readily be shown that the author of *Philaster* was indebted to those half-dozen plays, than Shakespeare to *Philaster.* The differences between the Beaumont 'romances' and Shakespeare's later romantic comedies are in fact more vital than the similarities. In *Philaster, The Maides Tragedy,* and *A King and No King* the central idea is of contrast between sentimental love and unbridled lust, and this gives rise to misunderstanding, intrigue, and violence. In Shakespeare's later comedies the central motive is altogether different: it is of disappearance and discovery. The disappearance is occasioned by false accusation or conspiracy. In *Pericles, Cymbeline,* and *The Winter's Tale,* the dramatic interest revolves about the pursuit of a lost wife or child, the wanderings and trials of the heroine, and her recovery;[1] in *The Tempest,* about the disappearance and discovery of the ousted Duke and his daughter. There is no

[1] See Morton Luce, *Hand Book to Shakespeare's Works,* p. 338.

resemblance between Beaumont's love-lorn maidens in page's garb pursuing the unconscious objects of their affection and Shakespeare's joyous girls and traduced wives. Nor is there in Shakespeare's later comedies any analogue to the sensual passion of the 'Beaumont and Fletcher romances,' to their Bachas, Megras, and Evadnes, their ultra-sentimental Philasters, their blunt soldier-counselors and boastful poltroons. Pisanio and Cloten have respectively no kinship with Dion and Pharamond. What appears to be novel in *Pericles* and its Shakespearian successors, the somewhat melodramatic dénouement, is, as I have said, but the modification of the playwright's well-known methods in conformity with the contemporary demand for more highly seasoned fare. But, in essence, the dramatic careers of Imogen and Hermione, are no more sensational than those of their older sisters, Hero, Helena, and Isabella. And what is most evidently not novel with Shakespeare in his later romantic comedies,— the consistent dramatic interaction between crisis and character,— is precisely what the 'Beaumont-Fletcher romances' do not always possess. Beaumont's characterization at its best, with all its naturalness, compelling pathos, poignancy, and abandon is lyrical or idyllic rather than dramatic; Fletcher's is expository and histrionic — of manners rather than the man.

Beaumont did not influence Shakespeare. And if not Beaumont, then certainly not Fletcher; for in the actual composition of the core of the so-called 'Beaumont-Fletcher romances' Fletcher's share was altogether subordinate; and since after the dissolution of

the partnership he attempted but one romantic tragic drama of that particular kind, *Thierry and Theodoret,* — and that a clumsy failure,— it must be concluded that in the designing of those 'romances' his share was even less significant. But to appreciate the contribution of Beaumont to Elizabethan drama, and his place in literary history, it is fortunately not necessary to assume that he diverted from its natural course the dramatic technique of a master, twenty years his senior and for twenty years before Beaumont began to write, intimately acquainted with the conditions of the stage,— the acknowledged playwright of the most successful of theatrical companies and, in spite of changing fashions, the most steadily progressive and popular dramatic artist of the early Jacobean period. With regard to Beaumont it is marvel sufficient, that between his twenty-fifth and his twenty-eighth year of age he should have elaborated in dramatic art, even with the help of Fletcher, so striking a combination of preceding models, and have infused into the resulting heroic-romantic type such fresh poetic vigour and verve of movement.

CHAPTER XXIX

CONCLUSION

BEAUMONT'S poetic virtues are his peculiar treasure; but the dramatic method of his heroic-romantic plays lent itself lightly to imitation and debasement. Not so much *The Maides Tragedy* and *A King and No King,* which respect the unities of interest and effect, as *Philaster, The Coxcombe,* and *Cupid's Revenge,* to which Fletcher's contribution of captivating theatrical 'business' and device was more considerable. Some of these plays, and some of Shakespeare's, too, and of Marston's, and Chapman's, and Webster's, paved the way for the heroic play of the Restoration — a melodramatic development of tragicomedy and sentimental tragedy, in which philandering sentiment, strained and histrionic passion, took the place of romantic love and virile conflict,— a drama in which an affected view of life tinged crisis and character alike, an unreasoning devotion to royalty or some other chivalric ideal obscured personal dignity and moral responsibility, and the thrill of surprise dissipated the catharsis, proper to art, whether tragic or comic.

Upon the future of the comedy of intrigue and manners, Beaumont exercised no distinctive influence. In plays like *The Coxcombe* and *The Scornful Ladie,*

the genius of Fletcher dominated the scenes of lighter dialogue and comic complication. And it is through comedies of intrigue and manners written by Fletcher alone or in company with others, especially Massinger, that Fletcher's individual genius exercised most influence on the subsequent history of the drama. The characteristics which won theatrical preëminence for his romantic comedies, heroic tragicomedies and tragedies, written after the cessation of Beaumont's activity, were a Fletcherian vivacity of dialogue, a Fletcherian perfection of 'business,' and a Fletcherian exaggeration of the tragicomic spirit and technique of which, in the days of the Beaumont-Fletcher partnership, Beaumont had availed himself but which he, still, by virtue of his critical faculty, had held somewhat in restraint.

From the time of Prynne's *Histriomastix,* 1633, there have been critics who have pointed to the gradual deterioration of the stage which, beginning, say some, with plays of Shakespeare himself, continued through Beaumont and Fletcher to the drama of the Restoration. Flecknoe, Rymer, Coleridge, Lamb, Swinburne, Ward, have commented upon phases of the phenomenon. And, recently, one of our most judicious contemporary essayists has in a series of articles developed the theme.[1] I heartily concur with the scholarly and well-languaged editor of *The Nation,* in many of his conclusions concerning the general history of this decline; and I have already in this book availed myself with profit of some of his sug-

[1] Mr. Paul Elmer More, *The Nation,* N. Y., Nov. 14, 1912, April 24, 1913, May 1, 1913.

gestions. I agree with him that the downfall of tragedy began when "the theme was altered from a single master passion to a number of loosely coördinated passions, thus relaxing the rigidity of tragic structure and permitting the fancy to play more intimately through all the emotions"; that this degeneration may be traced to the time "when ecclesiastical authority was broken by scepticism and knowledge, and the soul was left with all its riches of imagination and emotion, but with the principle of individual responsibility discredited and the fibre of self-government relaxed"; that "the consequences may be seen in the Italy of the sixteenth century"; and that "the result is that drama of the court which, besides its frequent actual indecency, is at heart so often non-moral and in the higher artistic sense incomprehensible." But when he ascribes this alteration of the theme of tragedy from a single master passion to a number of "loosely coördinated passions" to our "twin dramatists," and cites as his example *The Maides Tragedy* in which, as he sees it, we have "but a succession of womanly passions, each indeed cunningly conceived and expressed, but giving us in the end nothing we can grasp as a whole and comprehend";—and says that Evadne is "no woman at all, unless mere random passionateness can be accounted such," I shake my head in sad demurrer. First, because, as I have tried to show above, Evadne is anything but an incomprehensible embodiment of unmotived passions, and *The Maides Tragedy* anything but a "loosely coördinated" concern, and secondly, because I disfavour this attribution of the decadence of

tragedy, or of comedy, for that matter, to our *twin* dramatists. To substantiate such a charge it would be incumbent upon the critic to prove not only that the decadence is indubitably visible in the joint-work of Beaumont and Fletcher, but that it is specifically visible in Beaumont's, as in Fletcher's, contribution to that work, and also, that it was not already patent in the dramatic productions of their seniors; that it was not patent in Heywood's *Royall King and Loyall Subject*, for instance; in the "glaring colours" of Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*, and in his *Gentleman Usher* with its artificial atmosphere of courtly romance, its melodramatic reverses and surprises, its hobbling up of poetic justice; in the sensational devices, passionate unrealities and sepulchral action of Marston's *Malcontent*, the sophistical theme and callous pornography of his *Dutch Courtezan*, and in the inhuman imaginings of his *Insatiate Countess;* that it was not patent in the heartless irresponsibility and indecency of Middleton, and in the inartistic warping of tragic situations to comic solutions that characterize his early romantic plays; that it was not patent in the poisonous exhalations, the wildering of sympathy, and the disproportioned art that characterize the *White Devil* of their immediate contemporary, John Webster.

The decadence was hastened by Fletcher; but not in any distinctive degree by Beaumont. I second Mr. Moore's commendation of Prynne's "philosophic criticism of 1632 that 'men in theatres are so far from shewing lamenting sorrow, that they even delight themselves with the representations of those wicked-

nesses,' " but I deplore the application of that criticism to *Beaumont* and Fletcher, as that " *they* loosed the bonds of conduct and left human nature as a mere bundle of irresponsibilities."

Many of Fletcher's excesses and defects not only in the plays written with Beaumont, but in plays written after his death, have been conferred from the day of Flecknoe to the present upon Beaumont. There is very little "sinne-lamenting sorrow" in the *Valentinian* of Fletcher, or of Fletcher and Massinger, and very little in Fletcher's *Wife for a Month;* but in many of Beaumont's scenes in *The Maides Tragedy,* and *A King and No King,* and *The Coxcombe* the genuine accents of " sinne-lamenting sorrow " are heard. Fletcher certainly " loosed the bonds of conduct and left human nature as a mere bundle of irresponsibilities," but not Beaumont. Let the reader turn to that poet's scenes in the joint-plays (two-thirds of the great ones) as I have indicated them, or to what I have unrolled of Beaumont's mental habit, and judge for himself.[1]

The concession of the essayist from whom, as a representative of enlightened modern opinion upon the subject, I have been quoting,— that " as Fletcher's work stands, he may appear utterly devoid of conscience, a man to whom our human destinies were mere toys," I hail with delight, although I think that Fletcher the man had more honest ideals than Fletcher the dramatist. But, as a critic, I resent the surmise that Fletcher " was by nature of a manlier, sounder fibre than Beaumont." In the heroic-romantic com-

[1] Chapters XXII and XXV, above.

edy, *The Humorous Lieutenant,* Fletcher displays, indeed, as Mr. More says, "a strain almost like that of Shakespeare, upon whom he manifestly modelled himself in everything except Shakespeare's serious insight into human motives." But does that play reveal anything of manlier, sounder fibre than Beaumont's *A King and No King*?

Written in 1619 *The Humorous Lieutenant* has enduring vitality, though not because of its tragicomic presupposition; for the wars and rumours of war are rhetorical or humorous, the devilish design of the King upon the chastity of the heroine is predestined to failure,— and the announcement of her death, but a dramatic device which may impose upon the credulity of her noble lover but not upon the audience. In the MS. of 1625 it is styled "a pleasant comedie"; and such it is, of 'humour' and romantic love, upon a background of the heroic. It is Fletcher's best comedy of the kind; one of the best of the later Shakespearian age. The conception of the Lieutenant, whose humour is to fight when he is plagued by loathsome disease and to wench when he is well, is not original, nor is the character of the hero Demetrius; but in the elaboration Fletcher has created these characters anew, has surrounded them with half a dozen other figures no less life-like, and has set them in a plot, cunningly welded of comic, sentimental, and martial elements, and captivatingly original. Though the interest is partly in a wanton intrigue, and the mirth grossly carnal even when not bawdy, I think that the objectionable qualities are, for almost the only time in Fletcher's career in comedy, not in-

eradicable. The wondrous charm, "matchless spirit," vivacity, and constancy of Celia render the machinations of the procuress, Leucippe, and her "office of concealments" futile,—so much dramatic realism to be accentuated or mitigated at the will of the stage manager;—and the alluring offers of the king are but so many weapons for his own defeat. If the Lieutenant were not an indissoluble compound of hero, swashbuckler, shirker, and "stinkard," I fear, indeed, that he would lose his savour. But the love of Rabelaisian humour is, after all, ingrained in the male of the species, and if the license be not nauseating it is not necessarily damnable. This boisterous, pocky rascal who "never had but two hours yet of happiness," and who courts the battlefield to save him "from the surgeon's miseries," held the stage from the time of Condel, Taylor, and Lowin, to that of Macready and Liston, and there is no reason why his vitality should not be perennial. There are few more laughable scenes in farcical literature than those in which, having drained a philtre intended to make Celia dote upon the King, the Lieutenant imagines himself to be a handsome wench of fifteen, wooes the King most fatuously, even kisses the royal horses as they pass by. The meeting and the parting, the trials and the reunion, of Celia and Demetrius constitute the most convincing and attractive romantic-pathetic love-affairs in Jacobean drama since Shakespeare had ceased to write. Indeed, this "perilous crafty," spirited, "angel-eyed" girl "too honest for them all" who so ingeniously and modestly shames the lustful monarch and wins her affianced prince is

not unworthy of the master. Nor is Demetrius. The play contains many genuinely poetic passages, and some of those lines of meteoric beauty —" our lives are but our marches to the grave "— in which Beaumont abounded, and that Fletcher too rarely coined. With all the rankness of its humour, the play has such literary and dramatic excellence that one cannot but regret the infrequency with which Fletcher produced that of which he was capable.

But even this best of Fletcher's heroic-dramatic plays contains, as Mr. More has observed, " one of those sudden conversions which make us wonder whether in his heart he felt any difference between a satyr-like lust and a chaste love — the conversion of the lecherous old king." I grant Fletcher's surpassing excellence in comedy, especially the comedy of manners and intrigue as, for instance, *The Chances* and the *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife,* and I have elsewhere acknowledged his supremacy after Shakespeare in that realm. But we are now considering not that kind of composition or its technique, but the fibre which might be expected to show itself in compositions involving the element of seriousness. *The Humorous Lieutenant* is of that kind,— it is called a tragicomedy by some. Has it one tithe of the serious insight into human life of any of Beaumont's plays involving ethical conflict?

Inquiring further into the fibre of Fletcher, let us pass in brief review another play, a genuine tragicomedy this time, *A Wife for a Month,* written the year before he died, of whose heroine Mr. More says that " from every point of view, ethical and artistic,

she is one of the most finely drawn and truest women in the whole range of English drama." The complication, here, assuredly affords opportunity for the display of sound and manly fibre; and the tragicomedy is instructive in more ways than one: it illustrates Fletcher's skill in construction and his disregard of probability; his sense of moral conflict and his insensibility to moral beauty; his power to conceive characteristic situations and his impotence to construct natural characters; his capability of noble sentiment and poetic expression and his beastly perverseness of fancy, his prostitution of art to sordid sensationalism. The story of the cumulative torments to which a lustful usurper subjects the maiden, Evanthe, whom he desires, and Valerio whom she loves, is graphically estimated by one of the *dramatis personae*,—"This tyranny could never be invented But in the school of Hell: earth is too innocent." Beside it Zola's *L'Assommoir* smells sweet, and a nightmare lacks nothing of probability. Ugly, however, as the fundamental assumption is: namely, that the tyrant should permit a wedding on condition that at the end of a month the husband shall suffer death,—and with provision that meanwhile the honeymoon shall be surrounded with restriction more intolerable than death itself; and incredible as is the contrivance of the sequel,—kept a-going by the suppression of instinct and commonsense on the part of the hero, and withheld from its proper tragic conclusion by miraculous cure, an impossible conversion, and an unnatural clemency,—the plot is after all deftly knit, and the interest sustained with baleful fascination. But it would be

difficult to instance in Jacobean drama a more incongruous juxtaposition of complication morally conceived, and execution callously vulgarized, than that offered by the scene between Valerio and Evanthe on their wedding-night. In the corresponding scene of *The Maides Tragedy* (II, i), Beaumont had created a model: Amintor bears himself with dignity toward his shameless and contemptuous bride. But in Fletcher's play it is this " most finely drawn and truest woman " that makes the advances; and she makes them not only without dignity, but with an unmaidenly persistence and persuasiveness of which any abandoned ' baggage ' or Russian actress of to-day might be ashamed. And, still, the dramatist is never weary of assuring us that she is the soul of " honour mingled with noble chastity," and clad in " all the graces " that Nature can give. In the various other trying situations in which Evanthe is placed it is requisite to our conviction of reality that she be the " virtuous bud of beauty ": but the tongue of this " bud " blossoms into billingsgate, she swears " something awful," and she displays an acquaintance with sexual pathology that would delight the heart even of the most rabid twentieth-century advocate of sex-hygiene for boys and girls in coëducational public schools.

Two or three of the characters are nobly conceived and, on occasion, contrive to utter themselves with nobility. Valerio achieves a poetry infrequent in Fletcher's plays when he says of the shortness of his prospective joys:

A Paradise, as thou art, my Evanthe,
Is only made to wonder at a little,

Enough for human eyes, and then to wander from,"—

and when he describes the graces of spiritual love. And the Queen's thoughts upon death, though melodramatic, have something of the dignity of Beaumont's style. But the minds of the principal personages reflect not only the flashing current but the turbid estuaries of Fletcher's thought. The passion, save for Valerio's, is lurid, and the humour latrinal. To sketch the bestial even in narrative, however fleeting, is inartistic; to fix it on canvas is offensive; to posture it upon the stage is unpardonable. The last is practically what Fletcher has done here; and the wonder is that he appears to think that he is justifying virtue.

No; Fletcher had not the fibre of Beaumont even when he was writing with him; and he did not achieve "a manlier, sounder fibre," after Beaumont had ceased, and he had swung into the brilliant orbit which he rounded as sole luminary of the stage.

I object again,— and the reader who has followed the exposition of the preceding pages will, I hope, object with me,— to the dictum of a German writer of this latter day, that the reason of the degeneracy of *Beaumont* and Fletcher, ethically, "seems to lie in the narrowing of the drama from a national interest to the flattery of a courtly caste." Mr. More opines that such an explanation should not be pressed too far; and he suggests that one reason why "we are unable to comprehend many of the persons upon the stage of Beaumont and Fletcher" is that we are similarly unable to comprehend "the more typical men and women who were playing the actual drama of the

age." So far as Fletcher's *dramatis personae* are concerned, there is truth in this; but why couple Beaumont with him? If you omit a character or two in *The Woman-Hater,* which was a youthful *jeu d'esprit,* you shall find very few incomprehensible figures among those of Beaumont's creation. And as to the German mentioned above, Dr. Aronstein, what "flattery of a courtly caste" can he possibly detect in Beaumont's satire upon favourites in *The Woman-Hater;* in that burlesque of bourgeois affectations, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (the Court, too, was still reading the literature there satirized); or in his Philaster, who was a rebel; or in his Amintor of *The Maides Tragedy,* whose fate hinged upon his shuffling subservience to a king, or in the King himself on whom God sends "unlookt-for sudden death," because of his lust; or in his King Arbaces, whose general has "not patience to looke on whilst you runne these forbidden courses"; or in his scenes of *Cupid's Revenge,* which scourge the vices of the Court; or in his Sir Roger and Mistress Abigail and her scornful Lady,— or in his Ricardo and Viola, who are just a lover and his lass, and have never dreamed of Court or King at all?

I wonder whether it may not be possible for us henceforth to give to Fletcher, and the whole Fletcherian syndicate,— the Massingers, Fields, Middletons and Rowleys, Dabornes, and the rest,— the praise and the blame for what they produced, but eliminate Beaumont from the award. One grows weary of the attribution to him of moral irresponsibilities and extravagances in art of which he was, in all that we

have learned of his breeding, life, and mental habit the implicit opponent — very much like his brother Sir John,— and of the opposite of which he was in his poetic and dramatic output, as I have minutely demonstrated, the professed exponent. In the broad daylight of philological science and modern historical criticism we should no longer regard Beaumont-and-Fletcher as an indivisible pair of Siamese twins, constructing with all four hands at once the fabric of fifty-three plays, or even of ten, and tongue-and-grooving the boards with such diabolic deftness that each artisan shall for ever be credited with the merits and defects of both. It is, at any rate, time that the world of scholars,— and then the world of readers may follow,— render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.

As for Cæsar, we concede to him, John Fletcher, once for all, as he may be read in his independent work, by one even running, artistic virtues numerous and brilliant:[1] gaiety, wit, sprightly dialogue; mastery of stage-craft,— of all the devices of captivating plot and rattling 'business,' and all the conventions and theatrically legitimate clap-trap of dramatic types and humours, hallowed by success, adored by the actor, and darling to the public. We concede skill in the weaving of romantic complications, captivatingly cunning, and in the construction of situations irresistibly ludicrous; remarkable inventiveness of sensational adventure and spectacular scene and attractive set-

[1] They are well presented by Miss Hatcher in her *John Fletcher;* and they are again discussed in my forthcoming third volume of *Representative English Comedies.*

ing; realism at every turn, and an ability to portray manners, varied and minute. Above all, we admire, and thankfully rejoice in, his smoothness of mechanism, his lightness of touch, his contrivance and manipulation of pure comedy — whether of manners or intrigue,— and in his world of characters, not only laughter-compelling, but endowed with humour themselves and sworn to the enthronement of the Spirit of Mirth.

On the other hand we read on every page of Fletcher's independent contribution to English drama what, perhaps, was not the man himself, but his dramaturgic pose — still for the world the essence of the Fletcher who ruled it from the stage:[1] we read his 'shallowness of moral nature," his acquiescence in the ethical apathy and cynicism of the time; his indelicacy; his indifference to, if not irreverence for, the dramatic proprieties,— his subservience to popular taste and favour in an age when "the theatre had ceased to be the expression of patriotism and of the national life and had become the amusement of the idle gentleman and of such members of the lower classes as were not kept away by the Puritan disapproval of the stage." We witness with amusement but with self-reproach his presentation of characters superficial, and superficially refracting the evanescent vanities and heartless vices of Jacobean London, as if representative of actual and general life; his play of emotions feigned or sentimental; his violent con-

[1] See again Miss Hatcher's work, and G. C. Macaulay, *Francis Beaumont, A Critical Study*, especially pp. 186–188; and my essay on *The Fellows and Followers of Shakespeare* (Part Two) in the volume mentioned above.

ts, unnatural conversions, impossible revolutions ortune; we discern the absence of subtle intuition, failure to effect profound and lasting impression, " lack of seriousness and of spiritual poise." We , in the heroic-romantic dramas, improbability extravagance; and, in the tragedies, such as *Valnian,* a total disregard of the unity of interest,— that muddling of motives of which the editor of *Nation* has written,— and therefore the failure ealize unity of effect. There has been no moral ence: the suspense has been distracted by the va- of emotions stirred. After the hours of strain which the spectator has imaginatively subjected self, the relief — what Aristotle calls the catharsis s not forthcoming: because the intellect has not clarified but fuddled; the will has not been braced; feelings appropriate to tragedy — of pity and of — have not enjoyed an unthwarted, undiverted low. The faculties have been tantalized by mani, deceptive, agonies of thirst. They should have centred in one yearning, conducted to one clear ng of medicament, and purged by waters of truth, ce, and sympathy. From Fletcher's *Valentinian* *Bonduca* despite the poetry and the onrush of dramatic action there proceeds no calm, " all pas- spent "; no beauty that is peace. And of the icomedies, *The Loyall Subject* and *A Wife for onth,* this verdict may be even more readily pro-nced.

uch are the excellences and defects of Fletcher. us give him all the glory of the former; but stay n burdening Beaumont, who had faults of his own,

responsibility for the latter,— with the unmoral- immorality or extravagant artistry of Fletcher not associated with Beaumont. With the vices virtues of Fletcher's rocket, bursting in stellar nrome, Beaumont had nothing to do. To him e can be accorded only if he, after these three ries, be considered alone,— not for ever coupled Fletcher, but spoken and thought of, and known, amatist, poet, man of far sounder fibre, and more marrow,— of superior insight, imagination, and

xt to Shakespeare, the most essentially poetic atist of the early Jacobean period was Francis nont. He had not the learning of Jonson, nor ng career, nor the dictatorial position; nor did empt to rival him in comedy, or criticism. But reat poem, *The Maides Tragedy* is a thousand more enthralling and poetic than *Sejanus* or *ne.* Shakespeare always excepted, the only au- of tragedy in that day whose intuitions and lines ounding splendour at all compete with, sometimes ss, Beaumont's is Webster; but the fascination *Duchess of Malfy* is lurid, miasmatic, stupefy- that of *The Maides Tragedy,* breathless and breaking.

the drama of mingled motive, Jonson produced ne masterpiece that in poetry, valiancy of design, portrayal of the ridiculous, equals Beaumont's *ng and No King,*— the *Volpone;* but that is not omedy, and it drips venom. All that stands be- *A King and No King* and artistic perfection is énouement. If the lovers had died, their struggle

against temptation still continuing, their passion unfulfilled,— if in the moment of death, they had discovered that their union were no incest after all, Beaumont would have left behind him another consummate tragedy. As it is, to find a parallel in Jacobean literature, outside of Shakespeare, one must turn to Ford's *'Tis a Pity, She's a Whore.* There again with poetic effulgence the problem of incest is dramatized; but how half-hearted the struggle, insincere the moral,— the poetry, purple and unconvincing!

In romantic comedy, between 1603 and 1625, others have produced plays which from the dramatic point of view equal *Philaster,*— Dekker, Heywood, Marston, Chapman, Middleton, and Rowley. Not all even of Shakespeare's romantic comedies come up to *Philaster* in literary or dramatic excellence; but only Shakespeare has written what surpasses it.

In the comedy that delineates humours, *The Woman-Hater,* as regards both poetry and technique, falls below several plays of Dekker, Chapman, Marston, Middleton, and Jonson, and below the earlier efforts of Shakespeare; but in characterization it is as good as some of Shakespeare's. There is no comic figure in *Love's Labour's Lost,* the *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* or the *Comedy of Errors,* that surpasses Beaumont's Hungry Courtier; and the humorous dialogue and the prose as a whole of *The Woman-Hater* are more natural, and more intelligible to the modern ear. With Shakespeare's later comedies that in any degree avail themselves of the 'humours' element, or with Jonson's masterpieces in this kind, *The Woman-Hater,* of course, can not be placed in comparison.

But if for the nonce, we consider Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle,* merely in its 'humours' aspect, we must acknowledge that its characters are as clear-cut, as typical of the time and as provocative of laughter as those of *Every Man in his Humour,* which for all its historic significance most people nowadays read, or might read, with a yawn; and that it is less artificial in construction, more human in motive and character, more modern in mirth than *The Silent Woman,*— even though the object of its ridicule be now *caviare* to the general.

To set Beaumont's burlesque as a comedy of manners beside any of Shakespeare's comedies from 1594 down, would be futile, but of the early Shakespearian plays mentioned above none shakes more with fun than *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* and not one gives us the flavour of London,— its citizens, their affectations and ideals, their reading, habits and life, — or of England, that the *Knight* affords in every scene. If Shakespeare instead of writing, say, the *Comedy of Errors* had written *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* scholars would now be flooding us with *Variorum* editions of it, women's literary clubs would be likening him with fervour to Cervantes, and the public might be so well educated to its allusions and ideas that our Hebrew emperors of the theatrical world and arbiters of dramatic vogue would be "starring" it through the country to the delight of audiences that wisely make a show of understanding and enjoying everything that Shakespeare wrote. To what unrealized extent the fate of plays hangs upon the tradition of the green-room, the actor's whim, the

manager's enterprise or ignorance, and luck, is material for an essay in itself. I am not asserting that *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* pretends to poetry, as do all of Shakespeare's plays; but that for chuckling and side-long mirth, and for manners and insight into the life of a rarely interesting period, it is fine comedy, while as burlesque it is equalled by few of the kind in our language and excelled by none.

It may be true that burlesques lose their flavour with the passing of their victims. But that does not hold true of the drama of problems perennially recurring and of emotions common to men of every age and clime. Of such drama are *The Maides Tragedy* and *A King and No King*. They are not antiquated. And I doubt whether they are stronger meat than some of Shakespeare's plays, all of which are more or less 'arranged' before they are placed upon the modern stage. As to strong meat, the difference between the Elizabethan taste and the present Georgian is more a matter of variety than of flavour. Our forefathers liked their venison in gobbets, for three hours at a stretch, and washed it down with a tun or two of sack. The theatre-going public to-day likes its game just as high, but it varies the meal with other dishes as highly seasoned, — and washes it down with a foreign-labeled little bottle of champagne. Our ancestors called a depraved woman by a brief bad name, and put it into poetry. We denominate her, if at all, by some euphemistic circumlocution, in prose; but we none the less throng the theatre to see Dalilah play, and we follow with apparent gusto her sinuous enticements upon the stage. We rejoice in problem-plays more erotic, and far

more subtly perilous, than those which Shakespeare and Beaumont beheld. We are of an age of uplift, and meticulous reform. We would eliminate fornication and adultery; but not from our plays. They teem with — suggestion. There is nothing neurotic, nothing insidious in *The Maides Tragedy* and *A King and No King*. The grave of sin is wide open; and the spade that digged it stands in plain view, and is called a spade. On the whole I had rather have the Anglo-Saxon bluntness and gleaming poetry of the Beaumont than the whitewashed epigram and miching-mallecho of the twentieth-century play I saw last night. There is no reason why, properly cut and staged, Beaumont's greatest plays should not yield delight to-day. And as for the reader why should he not turn back to "the inexhaustible treasures" of entertainment offered by these plays. "They were," as says Mr. Paul Elmer More, "they were to the Elizabethan age what the novel is to ours, and I wonder how many readers three centuries from now will go back to our fiction for amusement as we to-day can go back to Beaumont and Fletcher."

I began this book by quoting from an historian of the drama of marked repute: "In the Argo of the Elizabethan drama — as it presents itself to the imagination of our own latter days — Shakespeare's is and must remain the commanding figure. Next to him sit the twin literary heroes, Beaumont and Fletcher — more or less vaguely supposed to be inseparable from one another in their works." And also from the last great poet of the Victorian age: "If a distinction must be made between the Dioscuri

of English poetry, we must admit that Beaumont was the twin of heavenlier birth. Only as Pollux was on one side a demigod of diviner blood than Castor can it be said that on any side Beaumont was a poet of higher and purer genius than Fletcher; but so much must be allowed by all who have eyes and ears to discern in the fabric of their common work a distinction without a difference." If I have succeeded in showing that in the fabric of their common work the distinction between Beaumont and Fletcher is measured by a wide and clearly visible difference, I shall be happy. Others, to whom I have repeatedly expressed my indebtedness even when disagreeing with particulars of their criticism, have cleared the way. If in this book anything has been added to their services that may help the world to distinguish these two dramatists not only hand from hand but mind from mind, and to see Beaumont plain, as I see him in the long gallery of his contemporaries, I shall be happier still; but most amply rewarded if, for the future, it may be fittingly recognized not only that Beaumont was the twin of heavenlier birth — the Pollux, but why he was. Then, perhaps, the world of sagacious readers may turn from talking always of Beaumont-and-Fletcher, and protest occasionally and with well-informed reason in the name of Francis Beaumont alone.

APPENDIX

GENEALOGICAL TABLES

TABLE A.

PLANTAGENET, COMYN, BEAUMONT, AND VILLIERS.

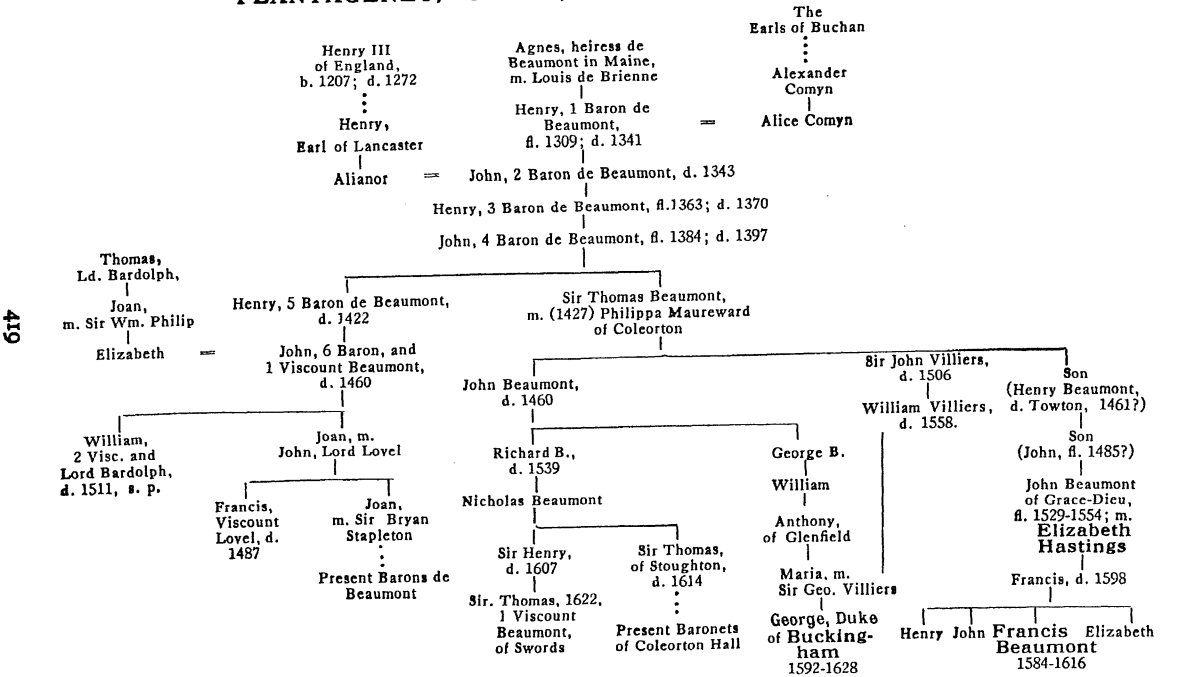


TABLE B

NEVIL, HASTINGS, BEAUMONT, TALBOT

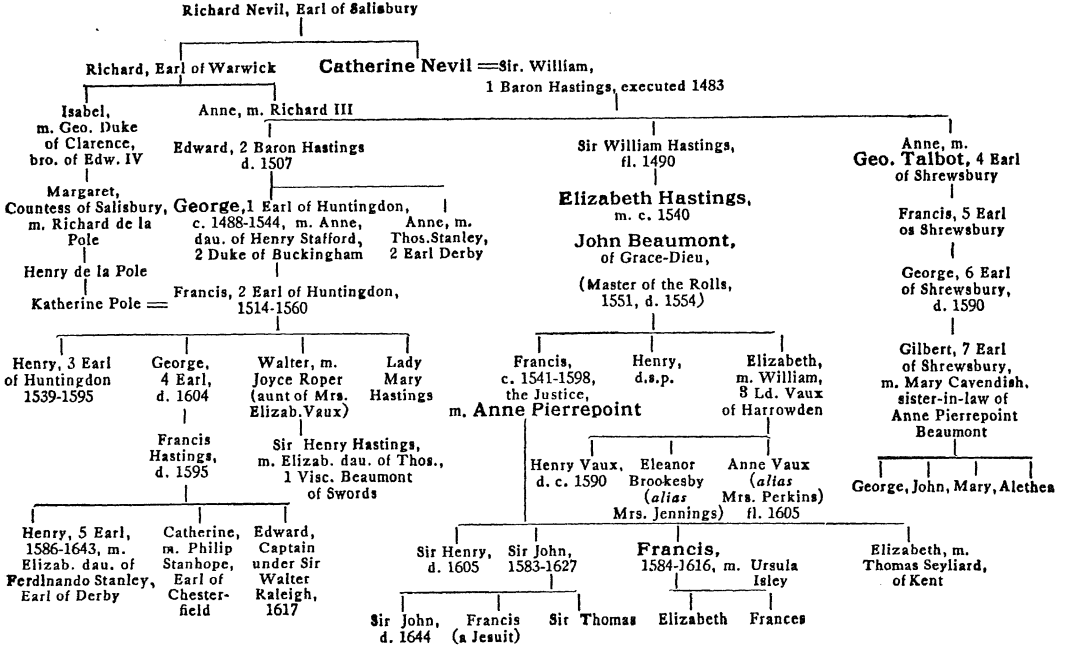


TABLE C.

BEAUMONT, PIERREPOINT, CAVENDISH, TALBOT.

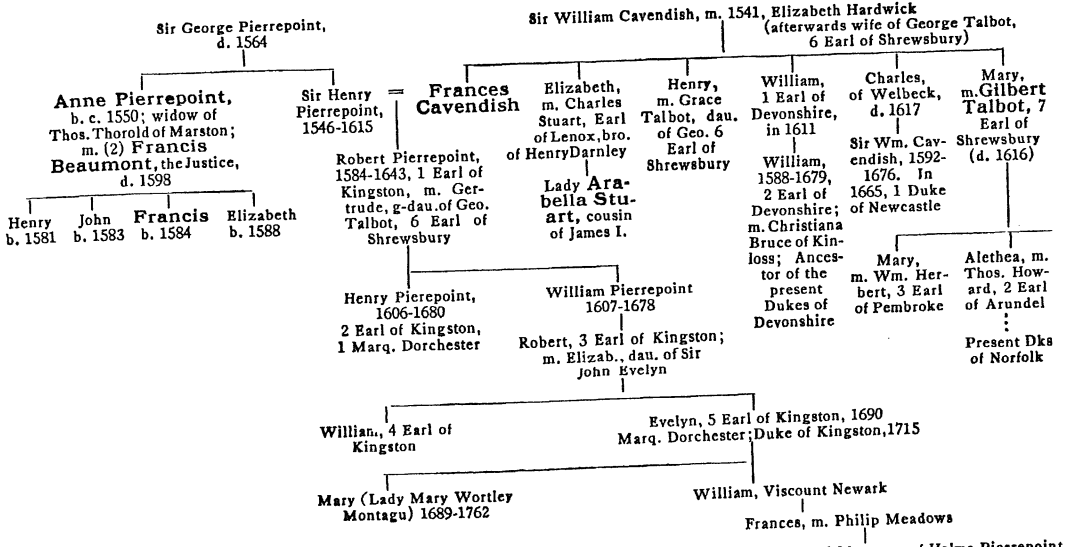


TABLE D.

BEAUMONT, VAUX, TRESHAM, CATESBY

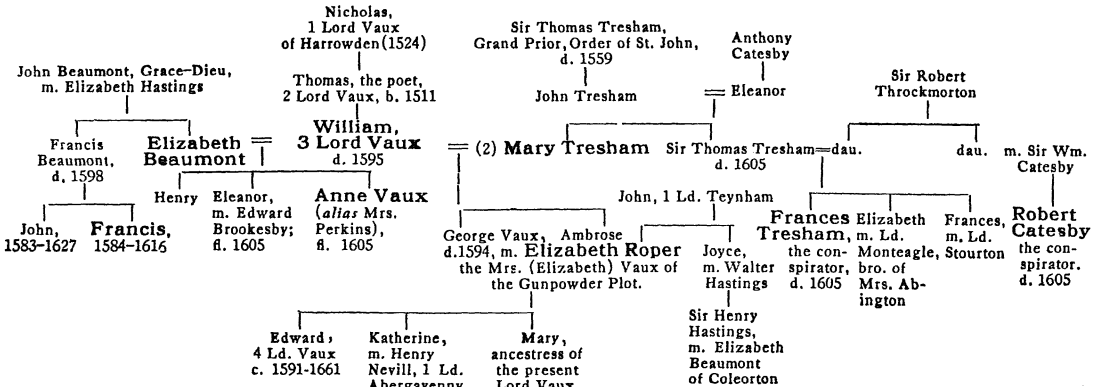
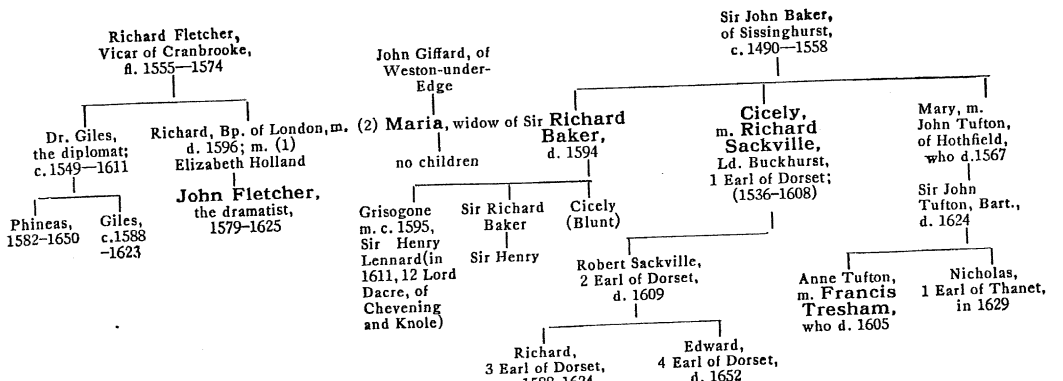


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